

*The LORE and  
the LURE of*  
YOSEMITE



HERBERT EARL WILSON



THE GATEWAY

*Photo A. C. Pillsbury*

# THE LORE AND THE LURE OF THE YOSEMITE

THE INDIANS

THEIR CUSTOMS, LEGENDS AND BELIEFS

BIG TREES

GEOLOGY

AND

THE STORY OF YOSEMITE

BY

HERBERT EARL WILSON



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## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

**I**T IS the purpose of this little volume to create and foster in the Yosemite visitor an interest in that fast dying race the Western Indian; in his mode of life, his customs, his religious beliefs and legends, in the days before the coming of the white man sounded the death knell of his people.

In the compilation of the information presented in the following pages the writer has supplemented the knowledge gained while living in the mountains of California and from his friendship with the Indians, by liberal reference to other writings notable among which are, "The Dawn of the World," Professor C. Hart Merriam; "Indians of the Yosemite," Galen Clark; "In the Heart of the Sierras," J. M. Hutchings; "The Discovery of the Yosemite," Dr. L. H. Bunnell; "History of Fresno County," W. W. Elliot & Co.; "The Yosemite," John Muir; and "Trees of California," Willis L. Jepson; "The Story of the Yosemite Valley," F. E. Matthes; "Geology Physical and Historical," H. F. Cleland Ph. D.

The writer wishes to make it clear, however, that this is in no sense to be considered a scientific treatise of the subject; rather has it been the design to supply simply written information.

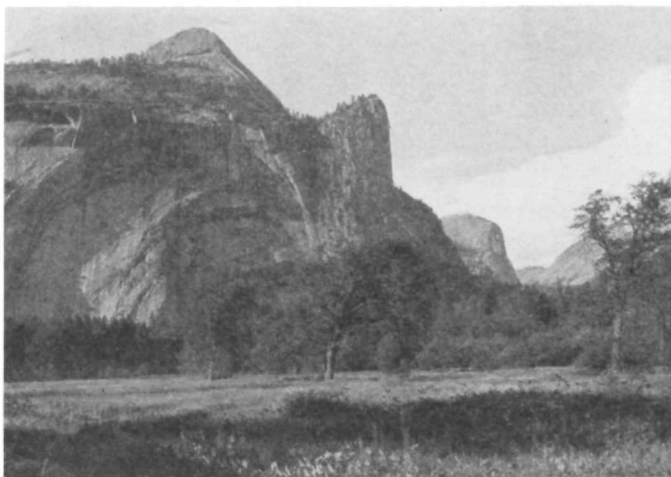
## THE LORE AND THE LURE OF THE YOSEMITE

The chapters on the Yosemite Valley the Big Trees and Geology are included with the hope that they may play some small part in instilling in the heart of the reader an interest in and a love for our National Park, and an appreciation of the efforts of the men who have made it possible as well as those who so efficiently administer its affairs.

HERBERT EARL WILSON.

Yosemite, California,

April 21, 1925.



ROYAL ARCHES AND NORTH DOME

## CHAPTER I

### THE COMING OF THE WHITE MAN TO YOSEMITE

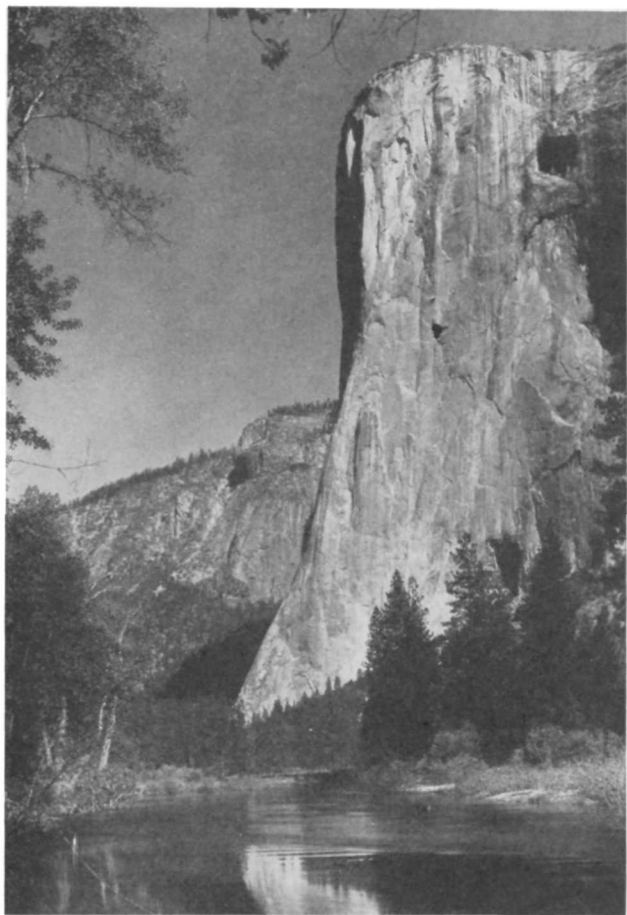
**H**ERE in the valley of Yosemite there dwelt in peace and plenty the people of Te-na-ya. They went about their quiet lives happy and contented. They were never visited except by members of some neighboring tribes, and then only on the occasion of their annual feast. They had few wars and these with their bitterest enemies. One day a runner from a friendly tribe on the great plains to the west brought into the Valley tales of the coming from the west of a strange people who had white skins, who brought with them many beasts of burden and

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great quantities of strange goods. Chief Te-na-ya sent out scouts and runners to verify these tales, and from vantage points along the trails to the west these men watched, with keen eyes and breathless interest, for the arrival of these new people. By and by their watch was rewarded by the sight, far in the west, of a long line of the pale faced people moving steadily toward them. At first sight of this invasion of their lands by an alien race the Indians were wrathful; that anyone should venture into their hunting ground without having first obtained the permission of their chief, infuriated them. But thinking it best to be at peace with these new people, they advanced to meet them and to bid them be welcome in the land. This the white men did; making their camps they scattered out here and there into the foothill country in search of gold. The runners of Te-na-ya went back to their chief and reported what they had seen, but for many days no white man came to their valley.

Among the white men was one James D. Savage, who early realized the value of the trust and friendship of the Indian people and set about to win them. The newcomers were all more or less successful in their search for gold and tales of their successes spread back to the plains and caused others to come. They soon found themselves in need of supplies and Savage erected a store and trading post on the Merced River below the mouth of the South Fork. Here the miners brought their gold to be traded for provisions and clothing. Here also came the Indians to marvel at the strange goods and ways of the white





EL CAPITAN (TU-TOK-A-NU-LA)

*Photo H. C. Tibbitts*

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men. In the round-houses of the tribes throughout the mountains long evenings were spent in discussion of the new people and the strange yellow metal which they dug from the ground or panned from the streams, which was so valuable that it could be traded at the white man's store for blankets and food. They decided to find out about it and accordingly a number of the braves sought employment as laborers on the claims of the pale faces. These carried back to their tribes tales of the metal and the manner in which the white man found it. It was only a short time then until a number of the Indians themselves had claims and were digging the yellow gold and trading it into the store of Savage for clothing, ornaments, blankets, and food. But, the white men came in ever increasing numbers in their feverish search for gold, overrunning the country and bringing with them hogs and donkeys that ate up and destroyed the acorn crop. Meadows of sweet clover and grasses were plowed up and destroyed that the white man might plant his crops of grain. The game was killed or driven from the hills by the rifles of the miners, and the fish were seined from the streams in great numbers. The Indian looked with fear upon this despoliation of his country. The situation grew so grave that a council of the chiefs and headmen of the tribes was called to discuss it. The outcome of this conference was the presentation to the white men of a proposition that they should share with the Indians all the gold found as a compensation for the damage done the country. The Indians also said that if this were done

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the miners and their families would be allowed to remain in peace. The implied threat in this proposal made the white men very indignant and they not only scornfully refused to comply with the request, but all of the Indians who had claims of their own were driven from the ground, and the claims taken and worked by white men.

Another council was called to discuss this new move of the whites, and it was decided that all of the tribes should unite to drive them from the country. In the meantime Savage had prospered. He had gone quietly about winning the friendship of the Indians, had taken several squaws to be his wives, and as a consequence was on intimate terms with most of the tribes. But, in spite of this he did not escape the system of depredations now inaugurated by the Indians and his trading post on the Merced River was raided during his absence by a mixed band of marauding Indians, who after carrying off everything that was of any use to them, destroyed the remaining goods. Savage then moved his store to a spot on Mariposa Creek near the present site of the town of Mariposa. He also erected a branch store on the Fresno River, but in a short time this was raided and plundered. Savage, who through his Indian wives was more or less in touch with the feelings and doings of the tribes, feared a general outbreak. In order to prevent this he conceived the plan of taking one of his squaws and a young chief with him to San Francisco, where he hoped to so impress them with the number and strength of the white men that on their return they would advise their tribes against

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resistance to the invasion of the miners. This plan was carried out, but upon their arrival in San Francisco the young chief, much to Savage's disgust, got drunk and remained in that happy state throughout their stay. During a quarrel brought on by the conduct of the Indian Savage lost his temper and struck him in the face, knocking him to the floor. He regretted his action instantly and hoped that the Indian, being drunk at the time, would not remember the incident when he became sober. After remaining for several days they returned to the trading post on the Fresno River. On their arrival there the Indians gathered around the young chief and the squaw eager to hear their tales of what they had seen in the white man's village. Savage hoped that the chief would tell all the Indians about the large number of white men in the city. But instead of this he made a speech during which he said that their brother, meaning Savage, was not loyal, that while in the city he had struck him in the face and knocked him down. That, while there were a great number of men in the village of the white men, they were not the same strong men as the miners, that they wore fine robes and high hats and rode in carriages, their faces were very pale, they were a weak people not given to war, and that if the Indians made war on the miners these people from the city would not come to help their brothers. Savage then realized that the plan had failed and that some other action was necessary to subdue the Indians.

A short time after the speech of the young chief the Indians organized their forces and began a series of raids

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on the white settlers. Outlying camps were robbed and burned. Miners going to and from their claims were ambushed and killed. Things grew so serious that a force of whites was organized by Savage and Sheriff James Burney, of Mariposa, to drive out the Indians responsible for the outrages. For a time this force was successful in restoring order, but the continued depredations of the Indians in the foothill country resulted in an appeal to Governor McDougall for troops. This appeal was answered by the organization on February 10, 1851, of the Mariposa Battalion, a force of some two hundred men recruited from among the settlers. Savage was elected as Major to command the force, and three Captains were elected, John I. Kuykendall, to command company A, John Bowling, to command company B, and William Dill, to command company C. This force was hurried through a short period of training and entered the field against the hostile Indians. After much chasing around, several minor battles, and the loss of a few men, they were successful in capturing a large number of the Indians. In the meantime the United States Indian Commissioners had taken up the case and a reservation had been prepared for the Indians on the Fresno River twelve miles east of where the city of Madera now stands. Many of the Indians who escaped the soldiers now surrendered on the assurance of the Commissioners that no harm would come to them at the hands of the whites, and they, with those captured, were sent to the reservation.

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The Indians accounted for in this way numbered nearly all of those in the region except chief Te-na-ya and his band, who were known to be located somewhere on the upper Merced River, beyond the furthest point yet explored by the whites. Major Savage had been repeatedly warned by his faithful Indian guides that he must not attempt to enter the stronghold of chief Te-na-ya, as it was the valley of death and evil spirits, at whose gateway stood a great rock chief, from the crown of whose head rocks would be rolled down to crush any who tried to enter. However, not daunted by these tales, the little band of hardy men, who, now that their task was nearly finished, were eager to be done and back to their homes, prepared to pursue Te-na-ya into his famous stronghold, and accordingly started in the direction of the Valley. Arriving at the South Fork of the Merced River they surprised and captured a small band of roving Indians who surrendered without resistance. Here the battalion went into camp and despatched a runner into the stronghold of Te-na-ya, requesting him to come to the camp and treat with them. The following day Te-na-ya answered the summons in person. A proposal that he take his tribe in peace to the reservation that had been prepared for them on the Fresno River, where they would be cared for by the white men, was met with the explanation that if he should venture with his people from their stronghold in the Valley they would be pounced upon and killed by their enemies. Te-na-ya said that he and his people were peaceful and happy in

their valley where there was plenty of food, and that he cared not to go to the camp of the pale faces, there to live upon the bounty of an alien race. But the arguments of the white men prevailed and Te-na-ya agreed that if allowed to return to his valley alone he would bring back with him his people to the camp of the soldiers. His request was granted and the next day he returned alone to the camp, saying that his people were coming, but that the snow was so deep that they could not move fast with their heavy burdens. After several days had passed and no Indians arrived, Major Savage detailed a guard for the prisoners and proceeded with the remainder of his command in the direction of the famous stronghold, taking Te-na-ya with him as a guide. On the way they were met by about seventy of Te-na-ya's band making their way through the deep snow in the direction of the soldier's camp. After being told by his Indian guides that these were only a part of Te-na-ya's people Major Savage detailed a second guard to escort the prisoners to the camp, and again proceeded toward the Valley. As he had little faith in Te-na-ya as a guide another Indian from the band was selected and Te-na-ya sent back to the camp with the soldiers.

At a point near what is now known as Inspiration Point, they came upon their first view of the Valley, March 25, 1851. It is impossible to define the feelings with which the different men of the command greeted their first view of this wonderland that has since become famous throughout the world. But, as it was Indians

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and not scenery that they were in search of, they made their way to the floor of the Valley and made camp for the night.

After the duties of the camp were attended to, and the men had had their supper, they gathered around the campfire to discuss the events of the day. The question of a name for the Valley came up for discussion. By this time the beauty and majesty of their surroundings had made an impression on most of them, and such suggestions as "Paradise Valley" and "Happy Valley" were numerous, but Dr. L. H. Bunnell, a private in Company B, suggested that it be named for the Indians who lived there. A verbal vote was taken and Dr. Bunnell's suggestion was adopted. The people of Te-na-ya were known to the white men as the Yo-sem-i-tes, and the Valley was accordingly named Yo-sem-i-te.

The following day the command made a thorough search of the Valley, but with the exception of one old squaw, who was too old to travel, and who had accordingly been left behind to die, they found no Indians. They did, however, find some huts which showed signs of recent occupation and several large caches of acorns and nuts, all of which they destroyed. Being short of supplies they returned that afternoon to their camp on the South Fork. From there they returned to their headquarters on Mariposa Creek, sending Te-na-ya and the other captives with an escort to the reservation.

While this was going on a number of the Indians on the reservation had become dissatisfied with the arrange-



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ments made for their comfort, and had made their escape to the hills. A second expedition was determined on to return these to the reservation, where the authorities had determined to keep all of the Indians, as well as for the purpose of another effort to bring in the remainder of Te-na-ya's band. This force under command of Captain Bowling, Major Savage being engaged in conference with the Commissioners at the reservation, entered the Valley again on May 9, 1851, and made camp near where the Yosemite Village now stands.

In the meantime Te-na-ya had made his escape from the reservation and was supposed to have rejoined his people in the Valley. The following day the soldiers surprised and captured a party of five Indian scouts near the base of the peaks now known as The Three Brothers. These were taken into camp where it developed that three of them were brothers, and the sons of the old chief. They assured Captain Bowling that if allowed to go alone they could and would persuade Te-na-ya to surrender with all of his people. Upon this assurance Captain Bowling allowed two of them to go, holding the other three as hostages. The two Indians did not return and Captain Bowling sent out a messenger with instructions to try to get in touch with Te-na-ya and tell him that he was expected in the camp. This messenger located Te-na-ya on top of the cliffs to the right of Indian Canyon, from which point the old chief had been watching the movements of the soldiers in the Valley, and held conversation with him from the bottom of the cliff.

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Te-na-ya said that he did not want to go back to the reservation, but would make peace with the white men if they would allow him and his people to stay in their Valley. This information the messenger brought back to Captain Bowling, and several scouting parties were sent out in an attempt to capture the old chief. During the day the three captives who had been allowed the freedom of the camp, made an attempt to escape in which one of them was successful. The other two were then bound to a tree, but later in the day succeeded in loosening their bonds and made another break for freedom, whereupon the guards fired at them, killing one and wounding the other. The one killed turned out to be the youngest son of Te-na-ya.

One of the scouting parties sent out by Captain Bowling was successful in surrounding and capturing Te-na-ya, whom they brought back into camp. Upon his arrival there the first object to meet his gaze was the dead body of his youngest son. His grief over this bereavement was pitiful, and for several days he maintained an unbroken silence, making no response to expressions of regret and sympathy on the part of officers and men, and disdainfully ignoring repeated questions as to the whereabouts of the remainder of his band. Despite a feeling of genuine sympathy Captain Bowling declined to take any chances of the wily old chief making another escape and had him bound and watched. With the characteristic hauteur of his race Te-na-ya resented bitterly the indignity of being tied up and made every

effort to escape. There was an abundance of sweet clover growing in the meadow about the camp and Captain Bowling, knowing the Indians' fondness for this, directed that Te-na-ya be allowed to have some of it. The guards then turned the old chief out on the meadow with a rope tied to his leg much in the manner of a hobbled horse. One afternoon while thus occupied he succeeded in freeing his leg from the rope and made a dash for the river and freedom, but was caught and brought back by his guards, whereupon he broke his long silence in an impassioned speech, directed at Captain Bowling, and which Dr. Bunnell in his book, "The Discovery of the Yosemite," translates thus: "Kill me, sir, Captain! Yes, kill me, as you killed my son; as you would kill my people if they were to come to you! You would kill all my race if you had the power. Yes, sir, American, you can now tell your warriors to kill the old chief; you have made me sorrowful, my life dark; you have killed the child of my heart, why not kill the father? But wait a little; when I am dead, I will call to my people to come to you; I will call louder than you have had me call (referring to the expressed wishes of the officers that he should call in his people); that they shall hear me in their sleep, and come to avenge the death of their chief and his son. Yes, sir, American, my spirit will make trouble for you and your people, as you have caused trouble to me and my people. With the wizards I will follow the white men and make them fear me. You may kill me, sir, Captain, but you shall not live in peace. I will follow in your footsteps, I will not leave

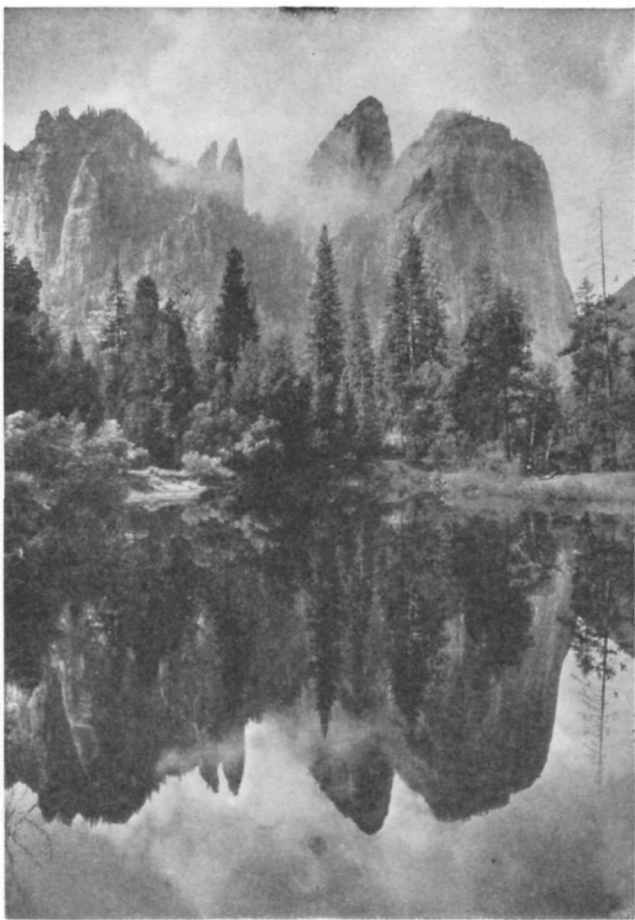
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my home, but be with the spirits among the rocks, the waterfalls, in the river and the winds; wheresoever you go, I will be with you. You will not see me, but you will fear the spirit of the old chief, and grow cold. The great spirits have spoken! I have done."

But Captain Bowling had no desire to kill the old chief, whose bravery he so much admired, and told him so with renewed protestations of regret for the death of his son, whereupon Te-na-ya relaxed again into sullen silence.

In the meantime a systematic search for the remaining members of Te-na-ya's band was being conducted by the soldiers, and information was brought in by a guide that they had been located in a camp on top of the mountain at the upper end of the Valley. The soldiers immediately started in pursuit, making their way in some places over snow five or six feet deep. Finally smoke was seen curling through the tree tops and proceeding cautiously, they found the Indians camped near a beautiful little lake. Quietly surrounding the camp they surprised and captured the Indians, who surrendered without resistance. The lake was then given the name of the old chief who had offered such stubborn resistance to the white men, and whose bravery and spirit was universally admired by the command, and to this day is known as Lake Te-na-ya.

The Indians were brought down to the camp in the Valley and thence to the reservation on the Fresno River. Here they early proved the wisdom of their old chief's contention by rapidly degenerating under the influence of the white man's so-called civilization. They



CATHEDRAL SPIRES (OR PU-SEE-NA CHUCK-AH) AND CATHEDRAL ROCKS

*Photo A. C. Pillsbury*

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demonstrated quickly the Indian's natural ability to absorb all of the white man's vices and inability to absorb any of his virtues. Their morals were ruined in their attempt to follow the examples of the baser sort of white men with whom they came in contact. Their old tribal customs and beliefs were ignored, and diseases with which their medicine men were unfamiliar lessened their ranks.

Te-na-ya begged to be allowed to take the remaining members of his tribe back to their valley in the mountains, promising that neither he nor any of his people would ever again make trouble for the whites. After much pleading he was allowed to go, taking with him only the members of his immediate family, but he was soon joined by other members of his band who escaped from the reservation, and made their way back to the Valley. They were allowed to remain there unmolested until, in the spring of 1852, a party of five prospectors entered the Valley. They were attacked by the Yo-sem-ites and two of their number were killed. The remaining three hid in the rocks until nightfall and succeeded in making their way out of the Valley and back to Mariposa. When the story of the murder of the two miners reached the officer in command of the Federal troops at Fort Miller, on the San Joaquin River, a detachment of regular soldiers under command of Lieutenant Moore, U. S. A., was sent into the Valley to capture the Indians responsible for the outrage. This force succeeded in capturing a few of the Indians, the balance, led by Te-na-ya, making their escape to the hills around the Valley. Among those captured were five who were wearing the

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clothing of the murdered men, and these five Lieutenant Moore lined up and ordered shot. The naked and mutilated bodies of the dead men were found and buried in the Valley; being the first white men to be killed there. After making an unsuccessful search for Te-na-ya and the remainder of the band, this force returned to Fort Miller.

Shortly afterward Te-na-ya, fearing that the white men would come again to take him to their hated reservation, gathered about him the remaining members of his tribe and crossed the mountains to Mo-no Lake, where they lived until the summer of 1853 with the Mo-no tribe. In the late summer of that year they returned to their Valley. Shortly after their return a party of Te-na-ya's braves again crossed the mountains and stole a band of horses from the tribe whose hospitality they had so lately enjoyed. This ungrateful action so infuriated the Mo-nos that, donning their war paint, they started, under the leadership of a young Mo-no chief, in pursuit of the thieves. From the rim of the Valley above the camp of Te-na-ya this young chief looked down upon the Yo-sem-i-tes in the midst of a feast. Bringing his warriors down into the Valley they surprised Te-na-ya and his braves, and in the hand-to-hand fight that followed Te-na-ya was struck in the head by a rock hurled by a young Mo-no brave and killed. It was perhaps fitting that the old chief should die in the Valley which he had so loved, and which, according to his lights, he had so stubbornly tried to retain for himself and his people. In this battle the Yo-sem-i-tes were practically exterminated and very few of their descendants are to be found today.



LIBERTY CAP

## CHAPTER II

### THE STORY OF YOSEMITE

**I**T IS not generally known that the Yosemite Valley is a very small part of the Yosemite National Park. Nearly all visitors to Yosemite are surprised to learn that the Park embraces over eleven hundred square miles of territory.

To those who are at all interested in nature the woods and streams of the Park present a fascinating study. To the naturalist they will reveal a wealth of forms, in fact, out-door scientists of almost every kind find the area a particularly fortunate spot for the pursuit of their studies. Within its boundaries are to be found more than



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eighty species of animal life, over two hundred different varieties of birds, about twelve hundred varieties of ferns and flowering plants, thirty-five species of trees, including three groves of the giant sequoia, or "Big Trees," ten varieties of trout, twenty-one species of reptiles, eleven different varieties of amphibians or batrachians, and a myriad of insects. Throughout the region the legibility of the records left by the glaciers and other tools used by nature in forming the continent is a source of unending interest to geologists.

However, despite its size, one of the charming features of this playground is the easy accessibility of its higher reaches. Leading from the Valley are easy trails up which the out-of-doors devotee may strike into a mountain land of surpassing grandeur and charm. A land sprinkled with park-like glades, dotted with lakes of exceeding beauty so numerous as to preclude the possibility of distinguishing them by name, watered by sparkling streams that are the children of mountain glacier and eternal snow, and whose banks are often wholly hidden in luxuriant masses of fern and flowering growth of many kinds and colors, clothed with endless forests of magnificent trees, and blessed with an enchanted climate.

Just to have seen the Valley, to have stood in the awe inspiring and thought inducing presence of its combination of majesty and loveliness, is itself satisfaction, but to wander through the higher reaches, to stand in the mighty shadows of the heaven reaching mountains, to climb into their embrace, to penetrate into their intimate

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recesses, to know their flowerstrewn glacier-chiseled canyons and granite cradled lakes, to stand upon their bare, ice-bound summits and hold communion with the sky is an unforgettable experience.

### THE GATEWAY

The varying emotions with which mere man greets his first view of Yosemite Valley, like human nature itself, run the scale from flippancy to tears of awe and reverence. Any attempt to describe the unutterable grandeur and sublimity of the scene unrolled before him only serves to demonstrate the pitiful inadequacy of our language to measure up to such a task. Well might Hutchings say, "When the painter's art can build the rainbow upon canvas so as to deceive the sense of sight—when simple words can tell the depth and height, the length and breadth, of a single thought—or the metaphysician's skill delineate, beyond peradventure, the hidden mysteries of a living soul—then, ah! then, it may be possible."

It is utterly beyond the power of language to convey any impression of the awe-inspiring majesty of the walls of solid granite that enclose the Valley on every side, darkly frowning and seemingly overhanging, as though to threaten with instant annihilation any who denied their power. If man ever feels his utter insignificance, his infinitesimal importance as a mere atom in the scheme of things, it should be when gazing upon this scene of appalling grandeur so charmingly blended with transcendent loveliness.

## THE LORE AND THE LURE OF THE YOSEMITE

Before you, as you enter the gateway, winds the beautiful Merced River, singing on its way from its source in the snow-capped peaks of the high Sierra to its ultimate destination in the bosom of the Father of Oceans, while flanking the river is a grass-carpeted, flower-strewn meadow, the sight of which is as a benediction among all the impressive magnificence of its setting..

### BRIDAL VEIL FALL

On the right the eye is drawn, as by a magnet, to Bridal Veil Fall, pouring over and down the mighty cliff from its elevated canyon bed six hundred and twenty feet above, to be torn and dashed into silvery spray on the rocks below. Famed in song and story the world over, this fall furnishes a scenic spectacle of such intrinsic beauty the eye never wearies of gazing upon it. The gracefully waving sheets of gauzy spray glimmering in the sunlight, the ever-changing rainbow hued clouds of mist that chase each other in such graceful abandon from bottom to top of the slender column; the ethereal and spirit-like quality of the whole inspires a feeling of admiration and awe almost amounting to reverence.

### EL CAPITAN

Across The Gateway, facing Bridal Veil Fall, stands El Capitan,<sup>s</sup> called by the Indians, Tu-tok-a-nu-la, or "rock chief." To apply human standards of measurement to this monarch of mountains is sacrilege. To attempt by mere words and figures to convey some idea of its stu-

## THE LORE AND THE LURE OF THE YOSEMITE

pendous massiveness, its nobly-defiant impressive individuality, is rankest folly. Towering over thirty-six hundred feet above the Valley floor, more than twice the height of Gibraltar, the world's largest and highest rock, the world's most nearly perpendicular cliff, embracing on its surface over three hundred and twenty acres of glacier-worn, storm-beaten solid granite, the unspeakable grandeur, the preeminent glory and strength, the air of unutterable age, irresistible power, and infinite repose of El Capitan beggar description. Here this great "rock chief" stands, the mightiest, the most glorious of his kind, keeping perpetual vigil over the rock portals of his kingdom, and we can but bow our heads in reverent awe to receive the benediction which he bestows upon all who pass his throne.

### RIBBON FALL

Looking across to the left toward the top of the mountain a gleaming silvery thread of lace-like drapery can be seen, pouring over the cliffs at an elevation of thirty-three hundred feet above the road. This is Ribbon Fall, named by the Indians Lung-oo-too-koo-yah, or "the graceful and slender one." Shooting out from a canyon three hundred feet deep, which it has chiseled for itself in the mountain top, the stream falls in a torrent of exceeding beauty, surrounded by gauzy clouds of vari-colored mist, over sixteen hundred feet into the rocky basin below. Viewed from a distance the water seems to descend with a slow and easy grace that is captivating in the extreme.

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But when standing near, one is appalled by the rapidity of its fall and the smashing vibration of its impact on the rocks. In the early spring, when the stream is augmented by rains and melting snows, the sheer loveliness of this, the world's highest unbroken waterfall, is charming beyond words.

### THE VALLEY

Once inside the Valley, enclosed by its mighty, temple-walls, when its heaven-reaching cliffs have thrown their mile long shadows over us, when the marvelous combination of beauty and grandeur, of noble cliff and waving flower, of leaping waterfall and tinkling brook, of magnificent tree and soft green grass, of light and shade and color, has made its first vivid impression we feel as though we were entering the joint abode of all the titans and fairies. And as the silvery thread of the river glistens down the long vistas that open before us, as the grand panorama ever-changing keeps us in an ecstasy of wonder and delight; as at every step some new beauty presents itself, as crystal streams, whose mossy banks are fringed with flowers that are always blooming, and grasses that are ever green, gurgle and ripple across our path, as one looks up between the towering pines and spreading oaks to the unyielding cliffs that rise in such noble outline against the blue vault of heaven, or watches the ever-changing lights and shadows that follow in such rapid succession across the sun-bathed face of El Capitan, or the gusty torrent of Yosemite Fall as it leaps the cloud-

## THE LORE AND THE LURE OF THE YOSEMITE

draped summit of the cliff to be dashed into dazzling spray on the immovable granite below, we are prone to acknowledge the truth of the statement, "Yosemite has not a rival on this earth."

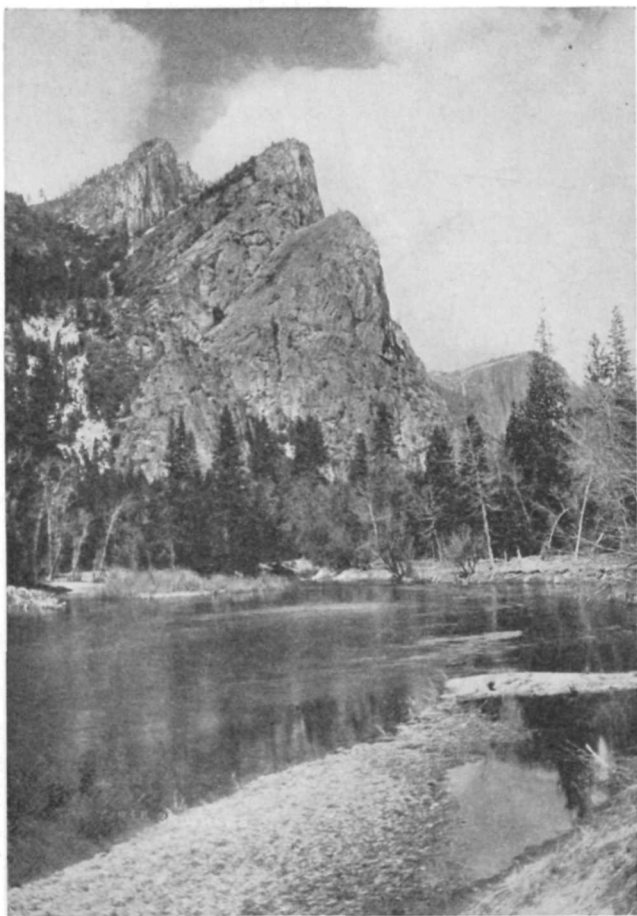
And, when the gaze has roamed around the rim of the Valley, when Cathedral Rocks, Cathedral Spires, Sentinel Rock, Glacier Point, Half Dome, Clouds Rest, Mount Watkins, Basket Dome, North Dome, Washington Column, Royal Arches, The Three Brothers, and a score of other impressive points, have brought to us their age old message, and the myriad of beauties of a myriad of nooks and corners have insinuated themselves into our consciousness, this impression is vivified.

### CATHEDRAL ROCKS

Above the Bridal Veil Fall towers Cathedral Rocks, one of the salient points of this end of the Valley, holding for the real cliff lover a personality and attractiveness all their own, though dwarfed by their proximity to the overshadowing hulk of El Capitan.

### CATHEDRAL SPIRES

Next to Cathedral Rocks is one of the most striking rock formations in the Valley, Cathedral Spires, called by the Indians Pu-see-na Chuck-ah, or "mouseproof storehouse." The double pinnacled towers are a real architectural structure; two monoliths of granite climbing nearly twenty-two hundred feet into the zenith, and buttressed at their base by boulders of every conceivable



THE THREE BROTHERS (OR WAW-HAW-KEE).

*Photo A. C. Pillsbury*

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size and shape piled in magnificent confusion. Nearby can still be seen a white scar on the granite marking the site of a third spire which report has it was shaken down during the earthquake of 1857, and the debris of which is said to have covered thirty acres. Aloof, dignified, sphinx-like, it is fascinating to ruminate on what miracles of evolution they have gazed, what ravages of flood and storm and glacier they have withstood.

### THE THREE BROTHERS

Facing the Cathedral Spires across the Valley are The Three Brothers, so called, it is said, from the fact that on the second expedition of the Mariposa Battalion into the Valley in 1851, a party of Indian scouts were captured near the base of this mountain, three of whom turned out to be brothers, the sons of old chief Te-na-ya. The Indian name for these peaks is Waw-haw-kee, signifying "falling rocks." Here again the almost perfect symmetry of outline suggests man's collaboration in the more unthinking architecture of nature.

### SENTINEL ROCK

A short distance further up the Valley and on the opposite side stands Sentinel Rock, the dominating landmark of the southern rim of the Valley, named by the Indians Loi-ya, or "water basket." Towering three thousand feet above the floor of the Valley, this magnificent column of granite, showing on its weather-worn face all shades of translucent grays and blues and mauves,



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is doubly impressive in its splendid isolation, its calm dignity and nobility, its sheer glory of stalwart beauty.

### YOSEMITE FALL

Opposite The Sentinel Rock, at a point nearly twenty-six hundred feet above the Valley floor, Yosemite Creek pours its waters over the cliff in the world's highest and most beautiful waterfall. Leaping the brow of the cliff in a majestic torrent, surrounded by eddying mists of iridescent color, the water goes hurtling down over fourteen hundred feet in a sheer drop to the first bench of the fall. Here it gathers itself for another rush, and after cascading for some six hundred feet, takes another drop of three hundred feet into the seething basin below. To attempt to describe the inexpressible beauty of Yosemite Fall is as impossible as it is unnecessary. During the early months of the season it is a truly awe inspiring sight. The immense volume of water from melting snows in the higher reaches of the Sierras rushes over the brink with irresistible force. The vibration of its thundering impact on the rocks has been known to rattle windows in Yosemite Village nearly a mile across the Valley, and the wind blown spray, shot with all the rainbow colors, can be felt a quarter mile away.

### GLACIER POINT

Glacier Point has been described by thousands as one of the paramount scenic points of the Valley. And, it is true that from here, nearly thirty-three hundred feet

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above the floor of the Valley, an unsurpassed view of the Valley and the surrounding country can be had. Words cannot paint the haze clothed heights and depths of the marvelous panorama unrolled before one's gaze from this glorious scenic viewpoint. From here every deep cleft, every storm-chiseled gorge, every heaven-scraping crag and towering peak of the great chain of the Sierra for a radius of many miles is visible to the naked eye. Looking up the cliffs from the Valley floor toward the top of Glacier Point one notes the two great ledges or steps in the cliff face, which look almost as if they had been fashioned by the hand of man, and jutting out over the bulging brow of the cliff, the famous overhanging rock. This rock, a block of granite some twelve feet in length by six feet in width, which looks as if it might have been carried and balanced there by some prehistoric giant, shoves one-third or more of its length over the thirty-three hundred foot brink of the cliff in splendid disregard of the breath-taking void beneath it. It is a favorite subject of the kodak artist and is probably the most photographed spot or object in the Valley. A fact not generally known about the overhanging rock is that by springing up and down on the smaller rock wedged against its base one can cause it to really rock, swaying up and down with a play of some four or five inches.

The top of Glacier Point is probably more easily reached, and by more different routes, than any other height in the Park. And, some two or three hundred yards back from the brink of the cliff stands Glacier

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Point Hotel, which is itself entitled to the distinction of being classed as one of the features of the region. Affording accommodations for some two hundred guests, and embodying, as it does, all the comforts and conveniences of the most modern city hotel with its own delightfully informal and rustic atmosphere, it stands unique among the hotels for which our western country is justly famous.

For the lover of hiking the Ledge Trail should hold a compelling attraction. Beginning near the Le Conte Memorial Lodge, the trail winds its way by more or less easy stages to the top of the cliff, presenting at every turn some new beauty to gladden the heart.

Visitors stopping overnight at Glacier Point will be lulled to sleep by the drowsy murmur of Vernal and Nevada Falls pouring into Merced Canyon far below, and throughout the day will be treated to a series of scenic spectacles that can hardly be duplicated anywhere else on earth. It is a particularly fortunate spot from which to watch the sunrise. Here the early riser may "Hail! smiling morn, that tips the hills with gold," and "watch the streaming tails of mighty comets of light heralding the approach of dawn from among the snow-clad peaks and forest heights of the Sierras." The highest peaks are first to catch the golden rays. On their lofty crowns the light lingers as if hesitant to disturb a sleeping world. Then the dark shadowed snow-fields are slowly changed to gleaming white, the golden flood catches and gilds the wavy tops of the forest, and as the light comes flooding slowly over the mountains the great peaks smile out one

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by one their joyous, age-old greeting. Far, far below, still sunk in the purple hush of shadow, lies the Valley, while the sun shoots lance after lance of gold down the mountain side. Then it suddenly streams through the canyon into the Valley below, throwing a long golden wedge of light that shoves out and out, reaching and stretching its luminous point, until in a few minutes it lights up the rugged, weather-beaten face of grand old El Capitan, bringing out in bold relief the figure of Tu-tok-a-nu-la. From far below the river shoots up glittering shafts of light, Half Dome throws its miles long shadow adown the Valley, and the brooding quiet is only broken by the soothing voices of the waterfalls, that rise in waves from the void below, and the glad, wild song of a bird trilling a rapturous greeting to the newborn day.

Here one may sit for hours, charmed by the magnificence of the giant canvas spread before him, and the always busy hand of the artist evidenced in the ever-changing color, light and cloud effects. From here one commands a splendid view of Half Dome, and of the three glaciers Lyell, Dana, and McClure. Lyell Glacier lies at the base of Mount Lyell, the highest peak in the Park. Off to the south, Gale Peak rears its pyramid-like bulk into the clouds; high above the Merced Canyon Mount Starr King and Mount Clark dominate the range, while just to the left of Nevada Fall, Mount Liberty Cap and Mount Broderick can be seen lifting their storm-beaten heads. Below one, softened by distance and the intervening blue haze, surrounded by the immutable cliffs of everlasting granite, sleeps the Valley, spread

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like some landscape artist's dream in miniature, the trees but "feathered toothpicks," the buildings and tents but tiny dots, and the Merced River a glimmering, silvery ribbon winding across a bed of green.

### HALF DOME

One's first sight of Half Dome calls to mind those expressive lines of Doubleday's,

"How massively doth awful nature pile  
The living rock."

Keeping watch over the rear of the Valley, even as El Capitan guards The Gateway, the ponderous immobility of this monster of granite inspires a feeling which defies analysis. From everywhere in the upper end of the Valley the eye is constantly drawn back to its impressive bulk, and who can doubt that if we were given, as was the heathen, to the practice of endowing with the personality and powers of a Deity inanimate objects of stone and wood, this inexpressibly sublime mountain would now be an object of worship.

Until the fall of 1875 the cloud-draped top of Half Dome had never known the tread of human foot. The ascent had baffled the attempts of all and sundry until it was accomplished in that year by Captain George Anderson. Captain Anderson was at that time a resident of the Valley, and it had been his desire since his arrival to scale the magnificent peak, not alone because of the distinction of being the first man to reach the top, but because it was tacitly understood that to the man

## THE LORE AND THE LURE OF THE YOSEMITE

attaining this distinction would be granted a concession for building a hotel at the eastern base of the dome. In his effort Captain Anderson was opposed by some two or three others who were actuated by the same desire. One might almost wish that such a creditable ambition had been inspired by a less mercenary motive. However, be that as it may, one day Captain Anderson disappeared from the Valley without having told anyone of his intended departure or destination. This procedure was in those days unusual, and after some two or three days had elapsed without him having put in an appearance, grave fears were felt for his safety and a search party was organized to look for him. This party, composed of several residents of the Valley, concluded that the most logical place to look for Captain Anderson was in the vicinity of Half Dome, and accordingly proceeded in that direction along the old trail past Happy Isles and Vernal and Nevada Falls. On the trail near Nevada Falls they met Captain Anderson returning to the Valley, and in answer to a query as to where he had been, he said, "Gentlemen, I have been to the top of Half Dome." One can almost imagine the skeptical cynicism with which this statement was greeted. Here were a number of hardy western pioneers, inured to hardship and danger, and skilled in the ways of the mountains, who for days had exhausted every effort to accomplish just what this genial Captain was so calmly claiming to have done. But Captain Anderson smilingly promised that on the following day he would lead the party to the top and

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they went back to the Valley and to their homes, hardly knowing whether to believe or not. However, on the following morning the party was again organized and proceeded along the old trail to the eastern base of the dome, where a strange sight met their gaze. Placed at regular intervals in an unbroken line straight up the glacier polished surface of the dome were a succession of small iron pegs, from each of which dangled a short length of rope. Captain Anderson had conceived this idea after days of the most painstaking exploration had failed to disclose any other way to the top. Taking no one into his confidence, he had, alone and unaided, gathered his materials, transported them over the ten miles of rough trail to the beginning of his ascent, fashioned the pegs, and slowly, step by step, had drilled the holes and built himself a ladder, nine hundred feet long, to the coveted summit. Can anyone imagine the sensations with which he reached his goal? The glories of the crags and peaks of the region seem if possible to be increased when their summits are reached by difficult and perilous climbing. Aside from the satisfaction arising from the accomplishment of a difficult task, let us hope he had his reward in the knowledge that never before had human foot trod the rock on which he stood—that never before had human eye from that far height ranged over the panorama of inspiring grandeur that was spread about him.

Captain Anderson, with the characteristic unselfishness of the typical westerner of his time, immediately set

about building a ladder to the top so that all might share with him this great privilege. But, while engaged in the work of preparing timbers for the ladder, he sickened and died. For many years his original ladder was the only means of attaining the summit, but his dream of a stairway by which all could reach the top in safety, was finally carried out through the erection by The Sierra Club, of a cable stairway, composed of two steel cables anchored, at a height of about three feet, to iron stanchions imbedded at intervals of ten or twelve feet in the granite. Up this stairway countless feet have climbed to the spot on which Captain Anderson stood, and the fame of the view to be had from that spot has crept abroad o'er all the world. And well it might, for if it be true that "Yosemite has not a rival on this earth," so is this view the culminating crown of scenic grandeur.

There is not only the breath-taking depth into which one may gaze, where a noble river is dwarfed into a silvery thread, where ten acre meadows look like postage stamps, where lakes take on the appearance of tiny pearls, and a myriad of trees of noble girth and height are blended into a living carpet of green, but the veritable forest of innumerable pinnacles of granite, of lordly peaks wrapped in a panoply of snow and cloud, of beautiful lakes sprinkled like a carelessly thrown handful of emeralds among legions and legions of magnificent trees that stretch away to the very horizon verge. The whole preeminently glorious scene sleeping, eternal, changeless, under an unchanging sky, and over it all the brooding,





SENTINEL ROCK (OR LOI-YA) AND THE MERCED RIVER

*Photo A. C. Pillsbury*

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unbroken, trancelike, listening silence of the far places of  
the earth.

#### NORTH DOME AND BASKET DOME

Facing Half Dome across Te-na-ya Canyon stands North Dome, called by the Indians, because of its resemblance to an upturned water basket, To-ko-ya, or "water basket." In the formation of North Dome and its neighbor, Basket Dome, the observant may read the record left by the glaciers during the ages when America was in the making. Two perfect domes, glacier polished, glistening, rising side by side above Washington Column and The Royal Arches, they are conspicuous from nearly the entire floor of the Valley.

Just below Washington Column and near The Royal Arches, the adventurous explorer will find an old cave formed by the talus from the surrounding cliffs. Into these caves members of the Mariposa Battalion, when on their second expedition into the Valley in 1851, pursued a band of hostile Indians. The volunteer soldiers closed around the mouth of the cave, confident that at last they had their quarry trapped, but upon venturing into the cave they found in the rear a narrow opening through which the Indians had passed and made their escape to the cliffs above. A few of the soldiers started in pursuit, but the Indians, hidden near the top of the cliff, rolled rocks down upon them, injuring one and knocking a rifle from the hand of another, and after a chance shot had killed one of the Indians, the soldiers withdrew, taking their

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wounded companion with them to their camp in the Valley, and the chase was given up for the day.

Lying inside near the mouth of the cave may be seen a large block of granite, which still bears marks of its use by the artisans of long ago as an anvil in the fashioning of their arrowheads and tomahawks.

### HAPPY ISLES

Here is Yosemite's favorite picnic ground. Situated in the far eastern end of the Valley, at the mouth of Merced Canyon, within easy walking distance of hotels and camps, and on the Valley auto road, this is a favorite haunt of those for whom the mountain trails are too strenuous, or those who wish a day of rest after more fatiguing work on the harder trails. Here every day during the season will be found scores of people. By auto, horse, and on foot they come, bringing their lunches with them, to while away the long sunshiny hours, to revel in the beauty surrounding them on every hand, and even to be lulled by the songful music of the tumbling water into a restful nap on the bosom of old mother earth. No matter how high the mercury may climb in other parts of the Valley, this shady island retreat, fanned by zephyrs cooled by their frolic with the leaping cascades of the river, is always refreshingly cool. An afternoon spent there serves to convince one of the truth of the statement that there seems to be no spot in the Valley from which one hasn't some inspiring view spread before him, no foot of ground that does not hold some novelty to charm.

## THE LORE AND THE LURE OF THE YOSEMITE

John Muir called the Merced River "One of the world's most songful streams." And to look upon "the laughing waters of Happy Isles," to watch the foam-crested waves and curling eddies of the whirling river, and listen to the deep refrain of its tumultuous song as it rushes recklessly down its boulder strewn course, is only another proof of this beloved old man's faculty for bestowing appropriately descriptive titles.

In the early spring when the river is swollen by rains and melting snow in the high Sierras, and the waters come pouring out of Merced Canyon to split around the isles and go rushing by, the roar of their passage over the rocky bed around the isles drowns the sound of the human voice. But, regardless of how high the stream may rise, and it comes up sometimes with almost incredible swiftness, the water is seldom muddy. This is due to the fact that the watershed of the Merced is almost solid granite. July is especially a happy month at Happy Isles, as it is during this month the white azaleas are in bloom. Here, too, is the beginning of that pathway of wonders, the trail to the high Sierras, which takes its winding way up past Vernal and Nevada Falls. From a point a short half hour walk up this trail one commands a splendid view of Illilouette Fall, one of the most beautiful and picturesque in the region.

### MIRROR LAKE

Mirror Lake, lying at the base of Half Dome and in the mouth of Te-na-ya Canyon, is one of the real show

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places of the Valley. A trip there is one of the most satisfying and wholly delightful of the entire itinerary of Yosemite. To see the lake at its best, when the reflections are clearest and the mirror upon its quiet bosom is most nearly perfect, this trip should be made before sunrise. At first sight the lake, owing to its small size, is slightly disappointing, but this is soon lost sight of and forgotten in admiration for the intrinsic loveliness of its setting. To have witnessed a sunrise at Mirror Lake is to have seen one of the most incomparably lovely sights the world has to offer. In the distance on the right stands Clouds Rest, its top scraping the blue six thousand feet above the lake, while close at hand, towering up nearly five thousand feet, the lofty over-shadowing wall of Half Dome rears its imposing bulk, and casts its mile long reflection in the mirror. On the other hand Mount Watkins throws its four thousand foot image, presenting thus eight thousand feet of grandeur to our gaze.

Contrary to the general belief the reflections in Mirror Lake are not due to any great depth of water, the lake in reality being very shallow, nor to its black sand bottom, but are caused by the shadows thrown across the lake by the surrounding cliffs. And so perfectly does the water mirror its surroundings that it is difficult at times to tell where mountain stops and water line begins. Another reason for making Mirror Lake the object of an early morning visit is that a breeze usually springs up during the middle of the day, ruffling the surface of the water, and rendering the reflections indistinct or invisible.

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The lake is slowly being filled by the silt and decomposed granite washed down by the waters of Te-na-ya Creek, and probably in the course of fifty or seventy-five years, unless some preventive measures are taken, will be completely filled. However, here is a spot of unequalled charm, without a counterpart on earth yet seen by man, and to have visited Yosemite without having seen at least one sunrise in this beautiful little lake, which the Indians of the region have so picturesquely named Ah-wei-ya, meaning "quiet water," is to have missed the real soul of Yosemite.

### CLOUDS REST

Clouds Rest, the grim, helmeted Captain of the immediate Sierra, sloping gradually from its base at the bed of Te-na-ya Creek, to its summit six thousand feet above the floor of the Valley, is one of the most majestic of all the beautiful peaks of the region.

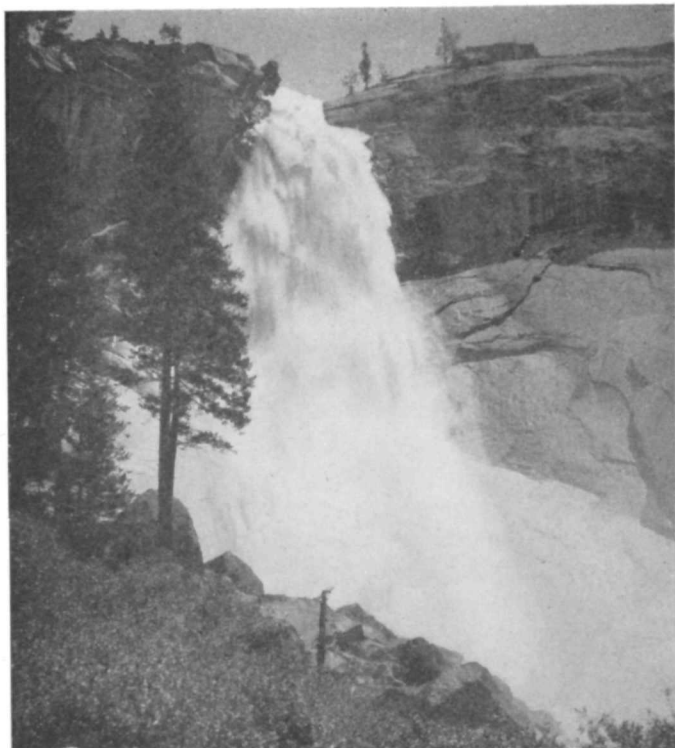
From its lofty summit one's view of the surrounding country is only limited by the range of one's vision. From here one may look out over a chaotic massing of noble mountains, over cone-shaped and castle-shaped peaks of every shade of blue and gray and purple, and down enormous gorges that are fiery green in the sun at the top and black as black velvet in the dark at the bottom, with here and there a streak of foamy white showing to mark the course of some stream on its way to the sea. Far off to the northeast can be seen the water of Te-na-ya Lake, lessened by distance and gleaming like turquoise in its setting of emerald forest and gray granite, while

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to the east Merced Lake can be seen nestling in its glacier-worn basin.

The summit of Clouds Rest is sometimes the rendezvous of storm clouds. The first to arrive is usually a fleecy, harmless looking little fellow, but he is quickly joined by other, more business-like ones. Seemingly out of nowhere they gather and mass their ranks until in a few minutes the top of the mountain is enveloped in their billowy folds. In a remarkably short time foaming streams form on the slopes to go rushing and tumbling down into Te-na-ya Creek and dwindle to nothing in the space of half an hour. In a few minutes, while one wonders at the quickness of the change, the clouds are gone and sunlight again holds the field. Fortunate indeed is the climber who is surrounded by one of these mountain storms. They are a never to be forgotten experience. Sometimes the sun is shining on the summit and one can look down upon a sun-bathed sea of cloud with here and there the top of some great peak lifting through like an island of refuge.

A good bridle trail has been constructed to a point near the top of Clouds Rest, from which the remaining distance can be made on foot in ease and safety. Zig-zagging its way up among tremendous granite boulders, offering at every turn unrivaled views of the incomparable country lying on every hand, this trail is one of the most picturesque in the region, and the trip one that should be made by every visitor to Yosemite who is desirous of going away with a real comprehensive idea of the extent and magnificence of the country comprising the Park.



NEVADA FALLS

*Photo H. C. Tibbitts*

## CHAPTER III

### SUNSET IN THE YOSEMITE

THERE are times, and they do not come often, when the cup of our life is full to the brim, and one added drop would be too much; when the heart swings to the deepest throb, when speech is forgotten in divine



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communion, and the soul mounts to the heights of the infinite. How long this lasts we never afterwards can say. Such an interval as this is a sunset in Yosemite.

All sense of time is lost in the golden enchantment, the overpowering sense of sublimity, of awful majesty, of sheer, brutal strength and power, of softness and light and warmth, of intrinsic beauty, fantastic loveliness, and charm beyond compare. Fairyland itself must be somewhere out there in the golden glow of the sunset. Rolling stretches of flower-strewn meadows, broad seas of green grass rippling away in emerald waves, row after row of tall, magnificent trees quivering in a shower of sunlight. Rising from the river in gray gossamer shapes the mist goes curling, smoky, diaphanous, mysterious, as though graves beneath the water are giving up their ghosts.

From high overhead a bird bursts into rhapsody, singing a pean of praise to the glory that is Yosemite; another, and another, until their songs merge into one, and the passionate, poignant sweetness of one of Schubert's serenades seems to drip from the eirie heights to linger vibrantly upon the mellow air and melt reluctantly at last into throbbing silence.

Embattled 'round the rim of the Valley, too rosy and golden, and purple and blue, for anything but the towers and turrets, and palaces, of some enchanted land, the majestic mountains rear their hoary snow-crowned heads. While bands of rose and saffron, and bloody reds, and lurid purples, are melting into liquid gold and gilding all the forest with their radiance, the molten sun, swim-

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ming in a haze of glory, turns red before slipping from sight, staying the receding fingers of its luminous hand as if hesitant to depart. Five thousand feet above the Valley floor, the majestic bulk of Half Dome is burnished by the last golden rays reflected from the snow-capped peaks above. Twilight creeps into the Valley, an advancing army robed in royal purple. Stars stud the heavens, a pale moon appears on the horizon; in an instant the day has vanished and murky dusk has come.

Night falls like a soft concealing curtain about you, crickets and katydids sing a dreamy chorus, out in the gloomy dusk a coyote raises his nose to the moon and voices the age-old protest of his race against the loneliness and sorrow of their lot, the breezes bring a faint perfume from flower-spangled fields, the trees softly shed their blighted leaves and sigh together over the folly of the world. Night and the stars and dusky isolation; a wild longing to turn back the years, to wipe out the ugly, blundering stains of mistakes and follies, to begin again and to build grandly, surely, relentlessly, with wanton prodigality of strength and material. And, though blinded, groping hands reach ever for a mirage, though years in their cycle of flight leave arms clasping only pallid mocking ghosts of disillusion, the spell that is Yosemite is proof against all disillusionment, and though you may never visit the Valley again, the bond her beauty has woven into your very soul will never be broken.



THE WAWONA TREE AND GALEN CLARK, DISCOVERER

*Photo J. T. Boysen*

## CHAPTER IV

### BIG TREES OF THE MARIPOSA GROVE

**M**IGHTIEST of the conifers, stately pillars of the Almighty—living things as you and I.

Of the twenty-six groves of the Giant Sequoias which inhabit the western slope of the Sierra Nevada Range the Mariposa Grove is the most famous. It includes five hundred and forty-five trees, covering one hundred and twenty-five acres

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and is one of the three groves located in the Yosemite National Park.

What a singular assemblage of these age-old patriarchs has nature preserved for us! Still growing, still reproducing yet linking the prehistoric with the present. Could they but speak, what strange tales would be told to the world of storms, of droughts, of earthquakes and all they have withstood; yet they stand erect and defiant.

Here it seems as though one is standing in a great temple; silent, restful, with the air seemingly filled with eternal peace. These huge sentinels stand with their arms outstretched like that of the Infinite One saying to the troubled world, "Peace be still." The hardest heart will be softened when gazing upon these wonderful gifts of God.

Standing somewhat alone we find here the Grizzly Giant, the largest of the grove, and probably the world's oldest living thing. It is one of the most wonderful of its kind, retaining nearly the same diameter—twenty-nine and six-tenths feet—for a great height above the ground. The first limb is over six feet in diameter, a hundred feet high. Towering two hundred and four feet, this majestic storm-beaten monarch stands, the king of the forest.

Part of the roots of the Grizzly Giant were exposed and some thirty years ago the park commissioners under the rule of the state, hoping to prolong its life, ordered them covered with earth. So one will find a considerable mound at present around its base. Whether this has helped or not, it still stands hale and hearty. So shapely, beautiful and symmetrical are these trees that one cannot realize their unusual size and height.

The splendid beauty and form of the Mark Twain with its height of three hundred thirty-one feet demands distinction among these grim and silent warriors. Another of this group of especial interest is the Telescope tree. It is possible to stand within the trunk where the heart has been destroyed by ancient fires and looking upward, have a clear view of the sky.

The Wawona tree, photographed and known throughout the world, with a ten-foot roadway cut through its base, is very unique, and here the visitor may linger for a picture to carry home in memory of the golden moments spent in this grove of majestic beauty.

These trees were named in honor of Sequoia, a young Cherokee Indian who had invented an alphabet for his tribe.

The Mariposa Grove was first known to the world by the efforts of Galen Clark who explored it in 1857. He, himself, first heard of it through a miner who had passed through it before stopping at his cabin which was located where Wawona now stands.

Shortly after discovery of the Mariposa Grove, one of Galen Clark's visitors tried to induce him to name it in honor of Lord Wellington of England, but he decided that the name Mariposa was more appropriate. Thus it is known today.

Lover of these trees as he was, some twenty years before he died, he prepared his grave in Yosemite Valley where he lived as its guardian, and around it he planted five of the seedlings of the Mariposa Grove. Carefully tended by him they thrived and now shade the spot where he rests.

The majority of the mature trees are from twenty to



THE POETS—LONGFELLOW AND WHITTIER

*Photo J. T. Boysen*

twenty-five feet in diameter; their height varying from one hundred fifty to three hundred feet. The bark is a reddish brown, of a fibrous nature and from one-half to two feet thick. Its surface is broken into longitudinal ridges and is more or less resistant to fire.

The bulging at the base of a number of the older trees has split the bark and so exposed the tree that the fires of the past have burned and destroyed the heart. Many people unacquainted with the customs of the Indians have thought that these trees had been used by them as a backlog for camp fires. This however, is erroneous; for the Indian always builds his fire in the open, and so arranges that all sides are accessible. Most of the ancient fires, no doubt, were started by lightning.

The leaves of the Sequoias are awl or needle shaped, and about one-fourth of an inch long. The cones are compact, and very small, measuring about one and one-half inches in diameter, and from one and one-half to three inches long. The cones mature every second autumn, with myriads of seeds as light as snow flakes.

The Sequoia Gigantea is immune from everything except lightning or fire, and the hand of man.

The wood is seemingly everlasting, though brittle and without much strength. Fallen trees after being covered for hundreds of years were found to be in perfect condition.

The known age of the Sequoia Gigantea which have been logged in other groves, is from eleven to thirty-one hundred years. John Muir, a naturalist who has devoted much of his time to the trees and preservation of the wild life of the Sierras, states in his book "The Yosemite" that he found



CABIN IN MARIPOSA GROVE

*Photo J. T. Boysen*



one in Kings River Park which was thirty-five and eight-tenths feet in diameter inside the bark four feet above the ground; and by laying bare a section of the charred surface from the heart to bark he counted over four thousand rings. The only way in which the age of a tree can be determined is by counting the annual rings, and this can be done only when the tree is cut down or a core taken out from the bark to the heart.

It is impossible to state the exact age of an intact tree. It has been found that after being cut, two trees of the same diameter may have a difference of a thousand years in their age. No doubt the growth of the older one had been retarded by burning at the base or denuding at the top by lightning or some hostility of the elements.

The ages of these giants must be counted in centuries, and not in years. It is almost impossible for the human mind to conceive that some of these trees were seedlings two thousand years before the birth of Christ; and when Imperial Rome was being builded some of them had a green crown upon which the eagle perched and screamed defiance to the storms.

The great experience of the late war that we have just passed through, and the agony and misery of those countries which participated, has duly impressed us all. But compare with this what the message of the breezes called through the needle fingers of these monarchs in their time.

Fossils of the *Sequoia Gigantea* have been found in the arctic regions of Canada and in Europe. The *Sequoia Gigantea* of the Sierra Nevadas and their cousins, the *Sequoia Sempervirens* of the Coast Range are merely remnants of a

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once great forest of earlier geological period. At present they are found nowhere else except in California.

It is impossible that this at one time great forest has been destroyed by fire, as remnants of them would have been found scattered over the territory which they inhabited. So it is evident that during the last glacial epoch many were destroyed.

John Muir, by close observation, has discovered that the groves of Sequoia Gigantea, scattered from ten to sixty miles apart, were found in spots protected from the ice streams of the glacial period. No proof has been found that it was more widely distributed on the Sierras since the close of the glacial epoch.

You cannot learn the message that these trees have for you in merely passing by. A day in their presence passes quickly, and with each moment you will be better able to appreciate their singular beauty and the miracle of their existence. To be in harmony with them, cast aside your worldly cares. In our battle for wealth we are prone to forget the real things of life, the things that cannot play us false. Health and happiness will be ours if we will let them be our teacher. Live a natural life; let nature take care of us as an all-loving God cares for the trees and flowers, and provides for the birds and animals of the forest.

Let us carry away the eloquent lessons they speak, and in a simple following of that divine law set in all our hearts, be forever reaching upward. Let us through life's day go forward cheerily, that our love and kindness may be everlasting for the blessing of those who follow us.

## INTRODUCTION TO MYTHS AND LEGENDS

COUNTLESS ages back, lost in the seas of antiquity, thousands of years before the Christian Era, the Indian people began—no one knows how. Did they spring from the soil, or migrate, by some aimless wandering, across the Bering Strait from ancient Mongolia, or did they actually descend from Noah, after the Flood? Their many centuries of known history is full of wonderful happenings.

California was a mythical land of romance long before the white man discovered it. Somehow the tales of a country rich in sunshine, fruits and gold crept out to the ears of explorers, although the tale-bearers were unknown. California is still a land of romance. Its history runs back through periods of civilization whose traditions are picturesquely fascinating. Our thoughts of early days are so tinted with tales of the Dons and the Missions that we don't always realize that before the Don the redskin ruled, and that our whole state, once upon a time, was an Indian hunting ground. The Indians who fought and hunted throughout the length and breadth of the state tried, even as we do now, to account for things. Where we use science they used imagination, and

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out of this effort were developed a myriad of myths and legends.

These were all, or nearly all, of more or less religious significance, for the Indian universally acknowledged the existence of a supreme power, who held their fortune in his hands, who answered prayers and punished wrong doing. So while from border to border, the length of our coast, the smoke curled upward from ten thousand lodge-poles, the Indian roamed, and hunted and fished, unafraid, o'er a thousand plains and hills, and the wild fox dug his hole unscared, from many a dusky breast went up a grateful prayer to The Great Spirit.

Of these myths or legends the Yo-sem-i-tes had their share. Ethnologists have found the gathering of authentic information on this subject a matter of the greatest difficulty. The Indians as a rule regard their legends as sacred and are opposed to speaking of them to the white man. Due partly to this reluctance, and in part to the fact that the present day Indian himself is but poorly informed on the subject, it is almost impossible to secure any reliable information as to the origin or meaning of many of them. While it is true that a great many of the myths or legends attributed to the Yo-sem-i-tes have some foundation in that they are, or have been, vouched for by some apparently reputable Indians, and have been repeatedly recounted with but little variation, it is equally true that a number of those told, or published, are patently but the bedtime stories of the mothers of another age, designed, as are our own of today, to point a

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moral to the younger generation, or the product of a vivid imagination belonging to some later-day Indian, possessing also a sense of humor and a penchant for having some fun at the expense of his questioner. The late Galen Clark says in his book, "Indians of the Yosemite," . . . "I have known of cases where 'legends' would be manufactured on the spur of the moment by some young Indian to satisfy an importunate and credulous questioner, to the keen but suppressed amusement of other Indians present."

Many of these legends, even those accepted as authentic by leading ethnologists, have no doubt been more or less embellished in translation, and garbled by countless repetitions. Some of them are conflicting and contradictory to a degree. All of them, however, are interesting, more or less poetic, and serve the purpose of an added fascination in the objects or localities with which they are connected.

## CHAPTER V

### INDIAN MYTHS AND LEGENDS

#### THE LEGEND OF TU-TOK-A-NA

MANY, many moons ago, two little bear cubs slipped away from their mother and went swimming in the river that winds its way through the Valley of Ah-wah-nee. When they had finished their swim they lay down on a rock to dry themselves in the sun. After a while they fell asleep, and as they slept the rock on which they lay began to grow, but they did not wake up, and the rock grew and grew, and lifted them up until they reached the sky.

When the old mother bear missed her cubs she was frantic with grief, and all of the animals assembled at the base of the rock to try and rescue the little brothers and bring them down again to the Valley. One after another the animals tried, by springing up the face of the rock, to reach the little brothers, but even the mighty monarch of the forests, the grizzly bear, with all of his tremendous strength, and the cougar, with all of his leaping power, fell far short of the top.

When all attempts had failed, and the animals had given up in despair, along came the little tu-tok-a-na, the measuring worm, the most humble of all the forest creatures, and started up the side of the rock. Inch by inch he drew himself up until he had passed the highest jump of the animals, up and up until he had passed from sight. He crawled day and night until at last he reached

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the top, and brought the little bear brothers down in safety to the Valley. And in honor of the little measuring worm the rock has ever since been known to the sons and daughters of Ah-wah-nee as Tu-tok-a-nu-la.

### THE LEGEND OF TU-TOK-A-NU-LA AND TIS-SA-ACK

Unnumbered snows have come and gone since The Great Spirit led a band of his favorite children into the mountains, and bade them rest in this beautiful Valley of Ah-wah-nee. They were weary and footsore, and were glad to rest after their long journey. Here they found food in abundance. The streams held swarms of fish, meadows were knee-deep in sweet clover, great herds of deer roamed the forests in the Valley, and on the high mountains, oak trees were bending under the weight of their acorns, grass seeds and wild fruits and berries grew in bountiful profusion. Here they stayed and built their villages. They were happy, and multiplied, and prospered and became a great nation.

To their chief came a little son to gladden his heart. They wanted this son to become a great chief, capable of the leadership of a great people. He was made to sleep in the robes of the skins of the beaver and the coyote, that he might grow wise in building and keen of scent. As he grew older he was fed the meat of the fish, that he might become a strong swimmer, and the flesh of the deer, that he might be light and swift of foot. He was made to eat the eggs of the great crane, that he might be keen of sight. He was wrapped in the skin of the



YO-SEM-I-TE FALLS (CHO-LACK) AND LOST ARROW (HUMMO)

*Photo A. C. Pillsbury*



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monarch of the forest, the grizzly bear, that he might grow up fearless and strong in combat.

And, when he grew to manhood, he was a great chief and beloved of all the people. His people prepared for him a lofty throne on the crown of the great rock which guards The Gateway of the Valley, and he was called Tu-tok-a-nu-la, after the great cranes that lived in the meadow near the top. The people of Ah-wah-nee were happy, for Tu-tok-a-nu-la was a wise and a good ruler. From his high rocky throne he kept watch over the Valley and the people whom he loved. He called on The Great Spirit who sent timely rains, so that the acorns grew in abundance, the hunters returned from the forests with game, and the fishermen from the streams with fish. There was peace and plenty throughout the Valley of Ah-wah-nee, and when Tu-tok-a-nu-la held speech with his people from his high throne his voice was deep and strong like the deep sound of the waterfall.

One day as Tu-tok-a-nu-la sat gazing into the glowing colors of the west, he saw approaching his valley a strange people, led by a maiden of wondrous loveliness. He called to them and the maiden answered him, saying, "It is I, Tis-sa-ack. We have come from the land of my people in the far south to visit with you. We have heard of the great and good chief, Tu-tok-a-nu-la, of his great people and his wonderful valley. We bring presents of baskets and beads and skins. After we have rested we will return to my people in the far south." Tu-tok-a-nu-la welcomed the fair visitor from the land to the

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south and had prepared for her and her people a home on the summit of the great dome at the eastern end of the Valley. There she stayed and taught the women of Ah-wah-nee the arts of her people. Tu-tok-a-nu-la visited her often in her mountain home. He was charmed by her wonderful beauty and sweetness, and begged her to stay and become his wife, but she denied him, saying: "No, I must soon return with my people to their home in the far south." And, when Tu-tok-a-nu-la grew importunate in his wooing, she left her home in the night and was never seen again.

When the great chief knew that she was gone, a terrible loneliness and sorrow came to him, and he wandered away through the forests in search of her, forgetting his people in Ah-wah-nee. So strong was his love for her, and so deep his sorrow, that he forgot to call upon The Great Spirit to send the timely rains. So great was his neglect that the streams grew smaller and smaller and finally became dry. The crops failed. The hunters came back from the forests without meat, and the fishermen returned from the streams empty-handed. The leaves and the green acorns fell from the trees, and the bright flowers and green grasses became dry and brown.

The Great Spirit became very angry with Tu-tok-a-nu-la. The earth trembled with his wrath so that the rocks fell down into the Valley from the surrounding cliffs. The sky and the mountains belched forth smoke and flame. The great dome that had been the home of

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Tis-sa-ack, was rent asunder and half of it fell into the Valley. The melting snows from the high mountains came down into the Valley in a flood and drowned hundreds of the people. But the wrath of The Great Spirit was quickly spent, and the heavens again grew quiet. The floods receded, the sun shone, and once more peace and calm reigned over Ah-wah-nee. The life-giving moisture from the renewed streams crept into the parched soil. The oak trees put on new leaves and acorns. The grasses again became fresh and green, the flowers lifted their drooping heads and took on their old gay colors. The fish came back to the streams, and the game to the forests.

And, when the Valley was once again clothed in beauty and plenty, there appeared on the rent face of the dome which had been her home, the beautiful face of Tis-sa-ack, where it can still be seen to this day. And the dome was named Tis-sa-ack, in memory of the fair visitor who had been loved by all the people of Ah-wah-nee. At the same time, that all might hold his memory in their hearts, there appeared on the face of the great rock supporting his throne, the majestic figure of the great chief, dressed in a flowing robe and pointing a finger to where he had gone, to El-o-win, the happy land beyond the setting sun.

## THE LEGEND OF THE LOST ARROW

Kos-su-kah, a young chief of the Ah-wah-nee-chees, smiled upon a maiden, Tee-hee-nay. Kos-su-kah was tall and strong and brave. Among all the sons of Ah-wah-

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nee there was none so keen of sight, so swift of foot, or so skilled in the use of the bow and the arts of the chase. Tee-hee-nay was the fairest and most beautiful of all the fair daughters of Ah-wah-nee. She was tall and slender as the fir, and as graceful and supple as the stem of the azalea. Her hands and feet were small and beautifully shaped, her silken hair was black as a moonless night and fell in a cloud to her knees. Her eyes were luminous pools of light, and her voice was liquid in its sweetness. Her laugh was like the musical tinkling of the brook, and she was good as she was beautiful.

Tee-hee-nay smiled upon the handsome Kos-su-kah, thereby confessing her love for him, and nothing remained but the formal presentation, by Kos-su-kah, of suitable gifts to her parents, and the preparation of a feast to celebrate their wedding. Kos-su-kah's suit was approved by the parents of Tee-hee-nay and the lovers were filled with joy. They began preparations immediately for a royal wedding feast. To do this Tee-hee-nay, assisted by the maidens of the tribe, would gather acorns and prepare the acorn bread and mush, collect grass seeds, wild fruits and edible roots; while Kos-su-kah should gather about him the best hunters of his tribe and participate in a big hunt on the high mountains that there might be an abundance of meat for the feast, to which the entire tribe would be invited.

Before saying their good-byes it was agreed between them that at sunset Kos-su-kah should go to the column of rock which stands just to the east of Cho-lak

(Yosemite Fall), and from there launch from his strong bow into the Valley an arrow, bearing on its shaft grouse feathers corresponding in number to the deer that had fallen before the skill of himself and his companions. That she might mark the flight of the arrow and the spot of its falling, and thus be the first to carry news of the success of the hunt to her tribe, Tee-hee-nay was to go at sunset to the base of the cliff and there watch for the signal.

After a most successful hunt, while his companions were making camp for the night, and preparing their game for transportation down to the Valley, Kos-sukah made his way to the point agreed upon, prepared the signal arrow, and was just ready to send it on its mission into the Valley, when the cliff's edge on which he was standing, gave way, carrying him with it and hurling him to his death on the rocks below.

After the seemingly endless day of waiting, Tee-hee-nay made her way to the appointed spot, and as the sun went down behind the cliffs, stood straining her eyes up to the heights, hoping to catch a glimpse of the manly form of her lover. But when night had settled his dusky mantle over the Valley, Kos-sukah had failed to appear, and no signal arrow had winged its way down from the cliff above. Thinking that the chase had led him farther afield than they had anticipated, that he had been unable to reach the cliff before darkness, and, knowing that his signal arrow would not be seen, he was, even now, making his way down the boulder strewn trail of Indian Canyon to deliver in person his message, she bounded



HALF DOME (TIS-SA-ACK) NEVADA AND VERNAL FALLS.

*Photo A. C. Pillsbury*

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up the trail hoping to meet him. Over rocks and fallen trees from ledge to ledge, over precipices where a mis-step meant certain death she hurried until at last she gained the foot of the cliff at a point from which, should he come, she could not miss him. There, through the long hours of the night, she waited and listened, longing for the welcome sound of his footsteps or his dear voice, and sending winging through the dark void of the night sobbing, passionate prayers to The Great Spirit for the safety of her loved one.

But when the first rosy fingers of dawn lit up the eastern sky and brought no sight of her lover, she sprang like a deer up the steep trail to the top of the cliff, and hurried to the spot from which the signal was to have been given. She called to Kos-su-kah, but only the echo of her voice came back in answer to her yearning cry. Reaching at last the edge of the cliff she came to the point from which a large portion had but recently fallen away. With sobbing breath and a heart numb with an awful certainty, she forced herself to look over the edge, and saw lying far below, the blood-stained lifeless body of her lover.

Stunned by the terrible grief of her loss Tee-hee-nay built, on the top of the cliff, a signal fire and summoned help from the tribe below. The heavy, lagging hours of waiting dragged away, and at last the asked for help arrived. Preparations were at once made for the recovery of the lifeless body of Kos-su-kah. A rope was fashioned from the trunks of young tamaracks by lashing them

together with the thongs of the deer that were to have furnished the meat for the wedding feast. When this was finished a young chief prepared to descend, but Tee-hee-nay pushed him aside. She herself must be the first to reach her lover, her hands the ones to perform this sad service. The sympathetic braves lowered her gently down the cliff until she stood beside Kos-su-kah's battered body. After gently kissing his cold, unresponsive lips she unwound from around her waist the thongs of deerskin and bound his body firmly to the rope, then watched in loving anxiety while the braves gently raised him to the cliff top. The rope was again lowered and Tee-hee-nay was drawn up to the side of her dead lover. Then she, who up to this time had been so brave, gave way to a passionate storm of grief. Throwing herself across the body of her loved one she entreated him to speak to her, sobbing prayers to The Great Spirit for the return of her dead. After a while her cries ceased and she grew quiet. When gentle hands stooped to lift her she fell back lifeless. She had died of a broken heart and her gentle spirit had winged its way to join her lover's in El-o-win, the spirit land beyond the setting sun.

Reverent hands brought the two bodies of the lovers, now reunited in death, down into the Valley, placed them side by side upon the funeral pyre, and scattered their ashes to the winds of Ah-wah-nee, the Valley both had loved. The signal arrow was never found, having been spirited away by the reunited lovers to El-o-win as a memento of their unfaltering love. And in memory of



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the beautiful maiden and the noble chief, the slender spire of granite, still standing there near the spot where Kos-su-kah's body was found, has ever since been known to the sons and daughters of Ah-wah-nee, as Hum-mo, or the lost arrow.

### THE LEGEND OF TIS-SA-ACK

Tis-sa-ack, who lived in a far away country, journeyed with her husband to the Valley of Ah-wah-nee. They had crossed the high mountains, carrying heavy burdens, and were footsore and weary from their long journey. They were also very thirsty and were hurrying to reach the Valley, that they might drink from one of the clear lakes or streams, which they knew would be found there. When at last they reached Ah-wei-ya (Mirror Lake), Tis-sa-ack, who was ahead of her husband, sat down to drink. Again and again she filled her basket, and drained it, so that when her husband reached the lake she had drunk up all of the water and the lake was dry. When he found that she had drunk up all of the water her husband became very angry, and forgetting the customs of his people, he beat her severely. Tis-sa-ack ran, but her husband ran after her and continued to beat her so that she laid down the baby basket containing her papoose. Then, when he did not stop, becoming very angry with the pain and humiliation, she turned and hurled her burden basket at him.

Then The Great Spirit himself, shocked by such conduct on the part of his children, became angry, and turned

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them all into granite. Tis-sa-ack became that noble mountain now called Half Dome, and today on the broken side of Half Dome can still be seen her face with the tears caused by her pain and humiliation streaming down it. Her husband was changed into Washington Column and North Dome, while beside him, the up-turned burden basket, which Tis-sa-ack in her anger had hurled at him, became Basket Dome. The baby basket containing the papoose, which had been kicked aside during the trouble, became The Royal Arches, and there they may all be seen today.

### THE LEGEND OF PO-HO-NO

Many snows have come and gone since an old squaw and a maiden of Ah-wah-nee were picking berries along the stream above Po-ho-no (Bridal Veil Fall). The maiden, looking down the stream to the brink of the fall, was attracted by the mists whirling high into the air. Charmed by the loveliness of the vari-colored cloud she moved down the stream that she might better enjoy the beautiful scene. Gazing into the mists she was drawn, as if hypnotized by some evil spirit, nearer and nearer the brink, until the whirling winds, with a shriek of unholy glee, whipped her up and carried her over the fall to her death on the rocks below.

The old squaw, terrified by what she had seen, quickly made her way down the cliff, and into the camp, crying that Po-ho-no, "The Spirit of the Evil Wind," had drawn the maiden into his clutches. The old chief of

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Ah-wah-nee then warned all in his tribe never to venture within the spray or mists of Po-ho-no, as it was the abode of an evil spirit who would draw them to their death, and carry their spirit down into his land of darkness and misery, there to hold it captive until he secured another.

So solemnly was this warning given that to this day no one has ever known a son or daughter of Ah-wah-nee to venture into the spray or mists of Po-ho-no.

### THE LEGEND OF YO-SEM-I-TE

Many summers and winters have come and gone since there lived in the Valley of Ah-wah-nee a large and powerful people, the Ah-wah-nee-chees. Long had they dwelt there in peace and plenty, but one sad year The Great Spirit became angry with them. There was famine in the Valley. No rain fell, and the acorn crop failed. The clover died in the meadows, and the game disappeared from the surrounding forests, and the fish from the streams. The earth trembled and the rocks fell down into the Valley from the surrounding cliffs. The snows melted in the high mountains and the floods came down into the Valley. Many of the tribe were killed by the falling rocks or drowned in the swirling waters. Those who escaped death fled in fear from the Valley. Some of them made their way across the high mountains to the shores of Mo-no Lake, and dwelt for a number of years with the Mo-no tribe.

A young chief of the Ah-wah-nee-chees married a Mo-no maiden, and to them a son was born. This son

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they called Te-na-ya. When Te-na-ya had grown to manhood, and after the death of his father, an old man, one of his father's followers, urged him to gather the remainder of his people and return across the mountains to the old home of his fathers in the Valley of Ah-wah-nee, which was now his own by right of birth.

Te-na-ya welcomed this suggestion and gathered about him, in addition to his own people, adventurous members of other tribes, who were willing to acknowledge him as chief, and make the journey with him. They crossed the mountains in safety and once again the smoke from the campfires of the Ah-wah-nee-chees was lifted on the winds of the Valley that had so long before been the home of their fathers.

One morning a young chief of the tribe, while on his way to Ah-wei-ya (Mirror Lake), where he intended spearing some fish, was suddenly confronted by an immense grizzly bear. The bear resented this intrusion upon his domain and made a fierce attack upon the young chief. The chief, who was weaponless, armed himself with the dead limb of a tree, which was lying near, and, after being sorely wounded, succeeded in killing the bear. Bleeding and exhausted he dragged himself back to the camp where he told his story to the admiring members of the tribe, who, in acknowledgment of his bravery and skill, called him Yo-sem-i-te, after the fearless monarch of the forest, the grizzly bear. This name was transmitted to his children, and in time, because of their fearless and warlike natures, the entire tribe came to be known as the Yo-sem-i-tes.

## THE LORE AND THE LURE OF THE YOSEMITE

### THE LEGEND OF PI-WY-ACK

Each year when the leaves turned to red and gold and were falling from the trees to be picked up and whirled about by the winds of Ah-wah-nee, a great feast was held in the Valley, to which came the neighboring tribes. As the time for this feast drew near the chief of the Ah-wah-nee-chees would send a runner across the mountains to the shores of Mo-no Lake, bearing to the Mo-no tribe an invitation to be the guests of himself and his people. This runner carried with him a bundle of small willow sticks, bound about with thongs of deerskin, and corresponding in number to the suns that must set before the day of the feast. For each sun that sank into the west while the brave made his journey he discarded one of these sticks.

One year when the time for the feast had arrived and the tribes were gathered about the campfires enjoying the generous hospitality of the Ah-wah-nee-chees, a young brave of Ah-wah-nee smiled upon a maiden of the Mo-no tribe. He saw upon her face and hands signs of the recent application of pitch and ashes, that she had put there as a sign of mourning for the death of her sweetheart, a Mo-no brave. But, she was young and fair, and the Ah-wah-nee-chee made every effort to win some response to his ardent wooing, but her heart was still sad with longing for her dead lover, and his advances brought no answering smile to her face. When the Mo-nos returned across the mountains to their home on the shores of Mo-no Lake, the maiden went with them.



TENAYA CANYON AND THE OVERHANGING ROCK ON HALF DOME

*Photo A. C. Pillsbury*

## THE LORE AND THE LURE OF THE YOSEMITE

After the maiden had gone the young Ah-wah-nee-chee was broken-hearted, and wandered about all winter, disconsolate and alone. But in the spring, when the flowers were blooming in Ah-wah-nee, and The Great Spirit had melted the snows from the mountains, he made his way across to the shores of Mo-no Lake, and there, in the dead of night, stole the maiden from her home. That the Mo-no braves might not track her and thus return her to her people, he carried her for a great distance in his arms. Then he put her down and she walked obediently before him back to Ah-wah-nee, and to the o-chum that he had prepared for her. That she might be happy and content to stay in her new home he had furnished the o-chum with the robes of the grizzly bear, and the skins of the deer, with beads and baskets, ornaments and shells; with everything dear to the heart of the Indian bride.

Here for five moons he guarded her closely and then, thinking that she was content to stay, he left the o-chum to join the men around the campfire, as befitted a young brave. But, as he sat listening respectfully to the words of wisdom that fell from the lips of the old men, he was seized with a premonition that all was not well with his bride, and returned hastily to his o-chum, only to find that the maiden had fled. Hot with anger he gathered four or five young braves of his tribe and started swiftly in pursuit. As they neared the top of Pi-wy-ack (Vernal Fall) they saw the maiden hurrying up the trail. Increasing their speed they rushed toward her, whereupon she

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plunged into the Emerald Pool and struck bravely out for the opposite shore. She soon reached the middle of the stream, but the rushing current was too much for her frail strength and she was carried farther and farther down until the hurrying waters whirled her over the fall and dashed her to her death on the rocks below.

Thus did a maiden of the Mo-nos prove her devotion to the memory of her dead sweetheart, and thus did the angry waters of Pi-wy-ack deprive a young brave of the Ah-wah-nee-chees of an unwilling bride.

### THE LEGEND OF LOI-YA

Uncounted flowers have blossomed and faded, and unnumbered snows have come and gone since Loi-ya, a beautiful maiden of the Ah-wah-nee-chees, and her mother were gathering grass seeds in the Po-ho-no meadow beyond the top of the Valley. They had filled their baskets and were returning over the old trail leading down from Patill-ima (Glacier Point), to their camp in the Valley, when Loi-ya, who was ahead of her mother, stumbled over a rock in the trail and fell over the cliff and was never seen again. Her mother was heart-broken and refused to come down again to the Valley, saying that she must wait there for her daughter to return. But Loi-ya did not come and her mother waited and waited, and while she waited she grew old and bowed with sorrow. After many long years had passed and still the mother waited, The Great Spirit took pity on her grief and turned her into granite. And there in the shadow



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of Sentinel Rock she may still be seen today, awaiting the return of her beloved Loi-ya.

### LEGEND OF THE ORIGIN OF THUNDER AND LIGHTNING

Once upon a time a mother deer took her two fawns to visit an old mother bear and her cub. While they were there the two mothers went out to pick berries and the old bear killed the mother deer. When she returned to her home the two fawns missed their mother, and asked where she was. The old bear told them that their mother was all right, that she was still picking berries, but the fawns saw the liver which the old bear had brought back with her, and knew that she had killed their mother. They wanted to revenge their mother's death, so they took the little cub out to play with them. Finding a big hole in the rocks they built a fire in front of it. After the fire was burning good, they told the little cub that they would play a game, that they would go into the hole and he could blow the smoke in on them until they told him to stop, then they would come out, he could go into the hole and they would blow smoke in on him until he told them to stop, and in this way they would find out who could withstand the most smoke. So the little fawns went into the hole and the little cub blew the smoke in on them, and after a while they told him to stop, which he did, and they came out. Then the little cub went into the hole and the little fawns blew the smoke in on him. After a while he called out that he had had enough, but the fawns kept on blowing and the cries of the little cub grew

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weaker and weaker, finally ceasing altogether. When the little fawns quit blowing and looked into the hole the little cub was dead, so they dragged him out onto the ground. Then they were scared, and fearing that the mother bear would find out what they had done, they ran away. When the old mother bear came out and found her little cub dead she was very angry. She pursued the fawns and they ran away up to the top of the mountain, where they found their grandfather, who lived up there among the rocks. The fawns told him their story and asked him what they were to do. Their grandfather heated some rocks which they rolled down the mountain, and one of the rocks struck the old bear and killed her. But the fawns were still afraid that something would happen to them, and asked their grandfather to change them into something that nothing could catch or harm them. Their grandfather made several suggestions which did not meet with their approval, until he asked them if they would like to go and live in the sky, telling them that up there nothing could happen to them and they would be safe and happy. The fawns said that they would like that. Their grandfather told them that he would build a fire and send them up into the sky, and that when they were high enough they were to call to him and he would stop them. After he had built the fire, and the little fawns were dancing happily around it, they accidentally splashed some water onto the fire and caused an explosion, which blew them high into the sky, where they and their children have lived ever since.

## THE LORE AND THE LURE OF THE YOSEMITE

And the lightning is the sparks that fly from their feet when they run over the rocks in the sky, while the sharp, quick thunder is the sound of the running of the smaller deer, and the heavy rolling thunder that of the older and heavier deer.

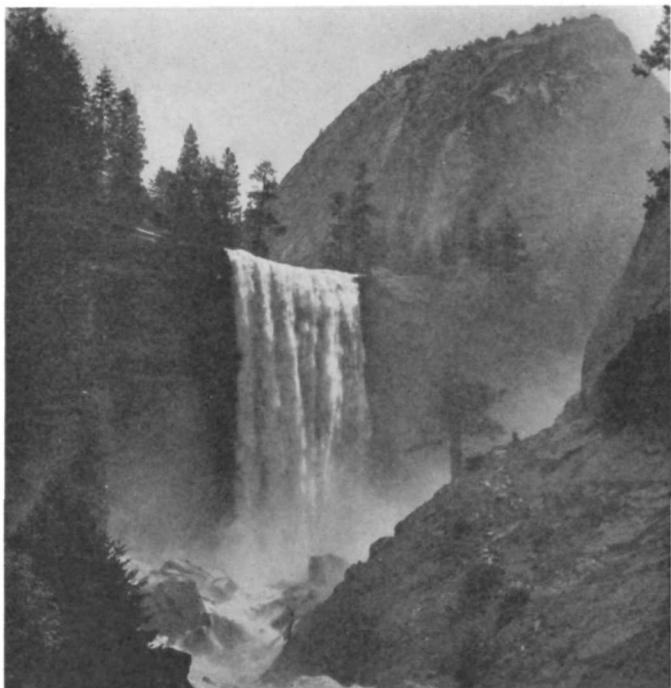
### LEGEND OF THE FISH WOMEN (MERMAIDS)

Long ago when the Ah-wah-nee-chees were a young nation the Merced River was the home of the Fish-women (Mermaids). These were beautiful creatures, having the tails of fish and the upper bodies of women. They could not leave the water, but would often sit on the rocks in the shallows, or around the edges of the deep pools, combing their long black hair, and chanting luring songs to the warriors of Ah-wah-nee. But, charming as they were, the warriors would have nothing to do with them.

One day while two braves were fishing in the deep pools of the river, with a net made of milkweed thread, the net became tangled with the rocks on the bottom of the pool. One of the braves dived down to loosen it, and the Fish-women, darting out from their hiding places under the rocks, tied the threads of the net to his toes, and held him under the water until he was drowned. Then they carried the brave away to their land beneath the river, and neither he nor the Fish-women have ever been seen since.



BRIDAL VEIL (OR POHONO) FALL



VERNAL FALLS (PI-WY-ACK)

*Photo H. C. Tibbitts*

## CHAPTER VI

### CREATION

**I**T WAS the belief of the Indian that in the beginning the Coyote-man made the world. Then taking the Frog-man with him he set out on a raft into the east. When they reached here the Coyote-man told the Frog-man to dive down and bring up some earth, which he did.

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From the earth that the Frog-man brought up the Coyote-man made the land. Then from the home of the Coyote-man and the Frog-man came other people, the Lizzard-man, the Cougar-man, the Fox-man, the Fish-man, the Star-woman, the Grizzly-bear-woman, and many others. The Coyote-man was a witch doctor of great power, and after he had made the land so that it was good, he decided to make a perfect people to live on it. The Coyote-man wanted to make these people like himself, but the Lizzard-man said that it would never do to make people with paws like the Coyote-man as they would not have fingers with which to take hold of things. This suggestion made the Coyote-man very angry and he jumped at the Lizzard-man who ran and hid in the rocks. Then they argued for a long time and the Coyote-man finally agreed that the people should have a hand with five fingers like the Lizzard-man. They then decided that as the world was dark and cold there must be light and there must be fire. So the Little-white-footed-mouse was sent to a far away land to steal the fire, which he succeeded in doing. While being pursued by the Valley-people from whom he had stolen the fire the Little-white-footed-mouse, afraid of being caught, hid the fire in the buckeye and cedar trees. From there some of the fire shot up into the sky and became the sun, so there was light and heat, but some of it remained in the trees, and ever since the people have known that by rubbing the sticks of the buckeye or cedar together, they could make fire.

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When the Coyote-man had the land all finished and was ready to make the people, he went all over the land and at each place where he wished the people to live, he stuck into the ground two sticks. At the same time he gave the places a name. When he had the sticks all put out and the places all named, he turned the sticks into men and women. The Coyote-man then told the Lizzard-man and the others that they must all turn into animals, which they all did. The Coyote-man became the coyote, and because he had never quite forgiven the Lizzard-man for persuading him to make the people with hands and five fingers, to this day he hunts and kills the lizzard whenever he can find him. The Grizzly-bear-woman became the grizzly bear and carried with her into her new state her fondness for acorns. The Cougar man changed into the cougar and still possesses the power to hunt and kill the deer just as he did before. The Fox-man became the fox and his skill as a hunter is just as great as before. The Frog-man became the frog and still retains his fondness for jumping into the water. The Lizzard-man became the lizzard and to this day still has the habit of running and hiding in the rocks. The Star-woman, because of her fondness for the bright abalone shells, was changed into the stars. The Fish-man became a fish and still makes his home in the water. And so they all became the animals and birds and flowers that are around us even yet.

When the people that the Coyote-man had made woke up and looked upon the world they found it good. They

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learned by watching the animals what articles were good to eat. From the grizzly bear they learned that the acorn was food. From the crane they learned to catch and eat the fish. The cougar taught them that the meat of the deer, the elk, and the antelope was to be eaten. They gained wisdom from experience, by observing how the animals and birds and bugs lived. They multiplied and grew strong and built villages, even as the ants. They were happy and worshipped The Great Spirit who had given them life, and the sun which kept them warm. And in time, out of the natural conditions surrounding them, and the accumulated wisdom of the ages, they slowly evolved a system of habits and customs, certain methods of collecting and preparing food, certain religious beliefs, and certain ideas of government.

All of the people who lived in the region of what is now known as the Yosemite Valley, were more or less related by blood or intermarriage, and their customs, religious beliefs, and characteristics were more or less curiously intermingled as a result thereof. What is said here will be generally understood to apply to all of them, although there were of course, differences, due, in most cases, to environment. In fact, as is true in the case of all the Indian tribes, their mode of living, their food supply, and even their habits and customs, were the outcome of the natural conditions surrounding them such as climate, available food supply and so on. From now on my story deals only with that tribe of Indians who lived in the Yosemite Valley, and who later came to be known as the Yo-sem-i-tes.





THE HIGH SIERRA

*Photo H. C. Tibbitts*

## CHAPTER VII

### THE COMING OF THE INDIAN TO YOSEMITE

THE Great Spirit gathered a band of his favorite children and led them into the mountains on a long and wearisome journey until they reached the Valley now known as Yosemite. Here The Great Spirit bade them rest and make their home. Here they found food in abundance for all. The streams were swarming with fish. The meadows were thick in clover.



ACORN CACHE AND YO-SEM-I-TE SQUAW

*Photo A. C. Pillsbury*

The trees and bushes gave them acorns, pine-nuts, fruits and berries, while in the forests were herds of deer and other animals which gave them meat and skins for food and clothing. Here they multiplied and grew prosperous and built their villages. They called the valley Ah-wah-nee, meaning "a deep grassy valley," and themselves Ah-wah-nee-chees, signifying "dwellers in Ah-wah-nee."

## ACORNS

The acorn from the black oak, which grows in profusion on the Valley floor, became the Indian's "staff of life," was to him what bread is to the white man. From it they made mush and bread. The preparation of this mush or bread was a tedious process, requiring for its completion some twelve or thirteen implements. In the fall when the acorns were ripe they were flailed from the trees with a long pole, gathered into long cone-shaped burden baskets, and carried on the backs of the squaws to the cache or storehouses. These storehouses were built by sticking into the ground five poles about ten feet long and interlacing them with willow withes into the form of a basket some six feet deep and three feet in diameter. Into this basket the acorns were poured and the whole structure was then covered with a thatching of small pine boughs interlaced with needles pointing downward so as to shed water and to keep out squirrels, mice and birds. The top was then covered with a roof of bark to make it waterproof.

When the acorns were wanted a small hole was made in the bottom of the cache through which they were

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taken as needed. They were then cracked open, the kernels removed and laid out on a platform or a large flat rock to dry in the sun. When dry they were placed in the mortars, which consisted of a number of circular holes, about four or five inches in diameter and the same in depth, worn by constant grinding in the surface of a flat rock. They were then pounded and ground by the squaws into meal or flour. This was done with a rock pestle wielded in the hands with a pounding and grinding motion. This was then placed in a sifting basket and sifted, the coarse portion being put back into the mortars for a second grinding to insure a flour of uniform fineness. When the grinding operation was completed the flour was placed in a basin made in the clean white sand of the river or lake shore. This basin was usually about three feet in diameter and quite shallow. The bottom and sides were lined with ferns or flat cedar boughs. Water was then heated by putting into the water baskets rocks heated in the fire, and this hot water poured very carefully over the flour. The water soaked through and into the sand, washing with it the bitter taste of the acorn. This operation was repeated three or four times until all the discoloration and tannin was leached from the flour, which was then removed, cleansed of adhering particles of sand, and placed in the cooking baskets. These baskets were of willow, were about sixteen inches in diameter and eighteen inches deep. Water was then mixed with the flour until a sort of paste or mush was formed. This mixture was boiled by dropping into it hot stones which

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were lifted from the fire by means of two sticks used in the manner of tongs. This was continued until the mush was thoroughly cooked. It was then either eaten in that form or made into loaves of bread. This was done by placing the mush in small baskets or moulds the size of the loaf desired. These were taken to the stream and, while still hot, the loaves were rolled from the moulds into the water. This caused the loaf to become hard and so retain its shape. Bread was also made from the mush by cooking it on flat rocks that had been heated in the fire.

### GRASSHOPPERS

Grasshoppers were a favorite food of the Indian, being regarded as a delicacy. To catch them a trench was dug across the center of a meadow and a fire built in the trench into which rocks were thrown. After the fire had burned to glowing embers the Indians formed in line on each side of the meadow and with the aid of brushes and much yelling, drove the grasshoppers into the trench, where they were automatically roasted on the hot coals and rocks. They were then eaten in that form, or crushed and beaten into a paste and mixed with other edibles. If desired for winter use they were dried in the sun and stored away in the cache. Grasshoppers were also caught and eaten raw.

### CLOVER GRASSES, GRASS SEEDS, AND EDIBLE ROOTS

Green clover and grasses were eaten raw; the Indian simply grazing on the meadows as would a horse. Dried

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grass seeds were gathered by shaking them from their stems into baskets and made into mush or soup. The bulbous root of the brodiaea, a lily-like plant that abounds in the meadows and along the streams, was also used extensively as a food, being prepared and eaten much in the same manner as the boiled domestic onion of today.

### BERRIES AND NUTS

Many varieties of edible berries were to be found in the Valley. From the berries of the manzanita, which grow in abundance on the Valley floor, a cider was made. These berries were also dried for winter use, as were blackberries, raspberries, or thimbleberries, strawberries, which, though very small, are of unusually fine flavor, currants, and choke-cherries, which if eaten raw are everything that their name implies. Pine-nuts were also considered a delicacy and were gathered in large quantities for winter use.

### FISH

The streams were rich in fish. Several methods were employed in their capture. One of these was to construct a trap such as is sometimes employed by white men today. This was done by building wing dams diagonally down toward the middle of the stream until the two ends almost met, and placing in the narrow outlet a long basket made of willow withes woven loosely together and closed at the lower end, which was raised above the surface of the water below the dam. The fish were then

driven down stream and into the trap by the Indians wading and flailing the water with sticks. Upon striking the basket the fish were thrown into the lower end and out of the water, where they were easily caught and killed.

Another and by far the most effective method was the use of the soap-root. Several baskets of the bulbous root of this plant, which is found in plenty in the meadows and along the streams in the higher elevations, were gathered and carried to a stream, where they were beaten into a pulp which was thrown into the water, or rubbed on stones in the stream, where it formed a lather much after the manner of soap. This lather had a sort of paralyzing effect on the fish, causing them to rise to the surface where they could easily be scooped up into baskets. In this manner large quantities of fish could be taken and it was the method most often employed.

Fish were also taken by the use of hooks made of bone and lines fashioned from the bark of the milkweed, with spears made of small poles and pointed with bone, or by snaring. The latter was done by forming a noose of a deerskin thong, or milkweed line, slipping it into the water and over the fish, and giving a quick upward jerk which tightened the noose about the fish and threw him from the water. This method required considerable patience and skill, and was usually resorted to only as a sport, or when no other method was available. The fish were cooked by roasting on hot rocks or over a bed of coals.

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### DEER

The deer, great herds of which roamed the forests of the Valley region, were an important item in the food supply. These were hunted by the braves and killed with the bow and arrow. After the thorough cleansing in the sweat-house, which was intended to free the hunter of all bodily odors and which preceded all hunts, the braves went out and secreted themselves on the windward side of the trails along which the deer passed on their way to water, and shot them from ambush. Still-hunting, or stalking, was also a method much in vogue among the more skillful hunters. In this the brave often resorted to the use of a headgear made from the headskin and horns of a deer as a means of deceiving the game and enabling him to approach to the close range necessary for killing with the bow and arrow. As a substitute for the somewhat heavy horns of the deer the light branches of the dead manzanita were often used. When a quantity of meat was desired the drive method was employed. This was done by the turn-out of a number of hunters who formed in a wide circle and closed in to a central point driving the game before them. In this manner they were often successful in killing a large number. The meat was cooked by roasting on hot rocks or in the coals of the fire. That not needed for immediate use was cut into strips and made into jerky by drying it in the sun. This was stored for winter use by hanging it on strings inside the o-chum. A young brave never ate the meat of the



## THE LORE AND THE LURE OF THE YOSEMITE

first deer he killed, it being their belief that if he did he would never be successful in killing another.

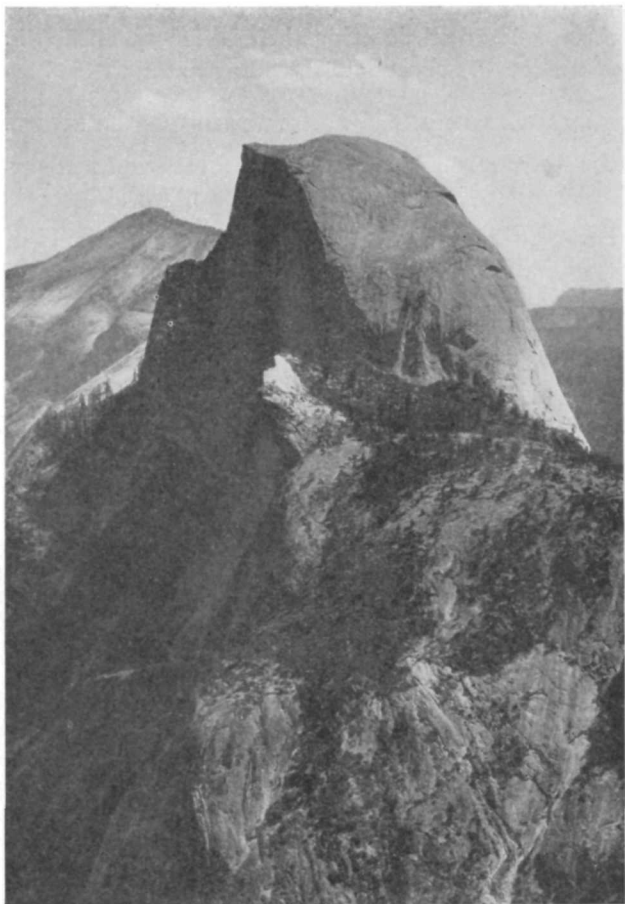
### SMALL GAME, MUSHROOMS, WORMS, AND BEETLES

Small game, such as rabbits, squirrels, and birds, were killed for food, as well as for their hides and feathers, which were used in the making of arrows, bedding and clothing, and ornaments. Mushrooms and the fungus of the oak were also eaten, as were worms, grubs, beetles, and the larvae of ants and other insects.

### DWELLINGS

It is but natural to suppose that the natives of the forests, surrounded as they were by naught but nature herself, unaided by, and untutored in, the mechanical and other arts of civilized man, knew no other and exercised no other guide in the construction of their places of abode than the dictates of common sense and the appliances at hand would suggest. Having no brick or mortar, no heavy well-cut timber for a pier, and no scantling for cross timbers, they drew upon mother earth for the foundation and upon the poles of the pine and cedar for scaffolding for the framework of their hut. They had no boards, either rough or smoothly planed, and the bark from the trees of the forest furnished the rustic cover for their ill constructed hut, or o-chum, as it was called.

These were built by taking a number of poles about twelve feet long, placing their ends in the ground around



HALF DOME (TIS-SA-ACK)      *Photo H. C. Tibbitts*

## THE LORE AND THE LURE OF THE YOSEMITE

an area about twelve feet in diameter, bringing them together at the top and lashing them with the thongs of the deer. The poles were then covered with slabs of cedar bark. A small hole was left at the bottom for an entrance, and another near the top for the escape of smoke. An ordinary sized o-chum, owing to the heat-reflecting power of its sloping walls, could be kept warm with very little fire, and was sufficient to house a family of six. In the summer they required but little shelter and their camps were made in the open, where a pile of brush placed on a scaffolding made of poles, or the boughs of a tree, sufficed to shelter them from the sun.

This was the Indian's castle—his palace; his luxuries were few indeed, and yet he was king of the forests and monarch of all he surveyed.

### BEDDING

Their underbedding was usually made from the skins of the larger animals such as the deer and bear. Their coverings were robes made from the skins of the smaller fur bearing animals. These were made by cutting the fur into narrow strips, which were loosely twisted so as to bring the fur entirely around on the outside, and weaving them into a warp made from the tough bark of the milkweed. These robes were very warm and were used as clothing when traveling in cold weather.

### SWEAT-HOUSES

The sweat-houses, which were to be found in every village, were similar in construction to the o-chum except that the top was rounded and the entire structure coated

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thickly with mud. A small opening was left at the bottom as an entrance and another in the top for the egress of smoke. These houses were always built near a stream or some body of water. One of the first steps in their preparations for a big hunt was a thorough sweating and cleansing in the sweat-house. This was done to free the brave of all bodily odors so that the deer could not detect his approach by scent. After the sweat-house had been heated to a high temperature by fires and hot rocks the hunter crawled inside and the door was shut. There he remained until in a welter of perspiration, when the door was opened and he rushed out and plunged into the icy waters of the stream or lake. This operation was repeated until they were satisfied all bodily odors had been eliminated. The sweat-houses were also resorted to as a means of treatment for various bodily ailments.

### CLOTHING

The Indian being constantly exposed to the elements needed very little clothing. It consisted, in the case of the man, of a breech-cloth made of skins which was worn about the loins. For the woman it took the form of a skirt which reached from the waist to the knee. These skirts were usually made of dressed doe-skin, finished at the bottom with a slit fringe, and sometimes decorated with bead or shell ornaments.

When on the hunt the brave sometimes wore a head-gear of loosely woven thongs of deerskin into which he would stick any feathers found on the trails. These feathers were carried back to camp to be used in fashioning the elegant head-dresses worn by the chiefs and head-

## THE LORE AND THE LURE OF THE YOSEMITE

men of the tribes. Beads of teeth, or shell, were worn about the necks of the women, as were beads made of adobe or clay. Both men and women sometimes wore moccasins made of deerskin. Children of both sexes usually went about entirely naked, or wore clothing fashioned after that of their parents.

### BASKETS

Basket weaving was the chief occupation of the squaws during the time not devoted to the collection and preparation of food, or other household duties. Baskets were made in many forms and sizes to suit the purpose for which they were intended. The principal woods used in the weaving of these useful and decorative articles were the withes of the willow and sour-berry bush, the red-bud, and the black fern root, the latter two furnishing the natural red and black which were the dominating colors of the designs, and which are woven into the baskets even now. Many of the designs on the baskets no doubt have some symbolical meaning which the Indians of today themselves do not know. With the exception of those on the hood of the baby basket where zigzag or diagonal stripes indicate a boy, and diamonds a girl baby, few, if any, of them are known.

There being no clay in the Valley from which to make cooking utensils, baskets were also used for this purpose. To make a good cooking basket fourteen inches in diameter and twelve inches deep requires about six months. The material must all be gathered in the proper season, dried, split and cured. The fern root and red-bud must

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then be soaked in water until it becomes pliant before the weaving may begin. When finished these baskets are entirely waterproof. The manner of their use in the preparation of food has already been described. Since the introduction by the white man of the metal implements of civilization, and the adoption by the Indians of a more modern style of cooking, the demand for baskets has practically ceased, and the industry of weaving them is rapidly dying out. A few old squaws, however, who cling to the old ways, still make such as they require for their own use, and a few others for sale. The comparatively high prices of the latter are accounted for by the long hours of tedious toil involved in the making, as compared with the money that could be earned during the same length of time in some less tiresome and more profitable occupation.

### WEAPONS

The bow, which was the principal weapon used by the Indian, and which was used both in hunting and in warfare, was made of cedar or oak, usually about three feet in length, two inches wide in the center and tapering to the ends, rounded on the inside and covered with the sinews of the deer. These sinews were applied wet and allowed to dry and contract, which gave to the bow added strength and elasticity. The strings were made from the thongs of the deer, and when not in use, the bow was unstrung, thereby retaining its strength for a longer period.

The arrows were made principally from the wood of the sour-berry bush, which is found in the Merced

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Canyon below the Valley. After the bark was removed and the wood scraped down to size, it was dried and seasoned in the shade, and made straight by frequent rubbing between two hardwood sticks. When ready for the heads a V-shaped notch was cut in the heavy end of the shaft into which was fitted the arrowhead of obsidian, or volcanic glass, which was bound on with the fibre of the milkweed overlaid with a coating of pitch to make it more secure.

The making of the arrowheads was a fine art requiring great skill and patience and was the especial business of a few of the older men of the tribe. The butt of the shaft was fitted with the halves of three feathers laid on lengthwise and bound with milkweed fibre. These were supposed to add to the accuracy of the arrow, as well as to the length of its flight. On account of the scarcity of suitable wood and the difficulty of preparing it, these arrows were only used in warfare and in the hunting of larger game, and were used as often as they could be recovered after being discharged. Those used in practice and in the hunting of smaller game were not fitted with heads, but were merely pointed shafts of fire hardened wood. The obsidian from which the arrowheads were made was obtained in commerce from the Mo-no Indians in the region of Mo-no Lake.

The Indians also fashioned hammers and picks from stone and from the horns of deer, which they bound to handles with thongs of deerskin. These hammers and picks were used in chipping the obsidian to the fine edge required for arrowheads, in the digging of their grass-hopper trenches, and other work about the camps.



## CHAPTER VIII

### HIS CUSTOMS, RELIGIOUS BELIEFS, AND CEREMONIES

THE Yo-sem-i-tes, as is true of nearly all Indian tribes, were of an intensely religious temperament. They seem to have had a fairly well defined idea of a Deity, known as The Great Spirit, who looked after their welfare, rewarding virtue and punishing wrong, and

who lived in El-o-win, the spirit land beyond the setting sun. There was also the evil spirit lurking always to do them harm. They believed that when one of their number died, if he had lived a life pleasing to The Great Spirit, he and all of his possessions were taken to El-o-win to be among his fathers. But in case the Indian had been bad and had lived in a manner displeasing to The Great Spirit, he was sent back to earth to live another life in the form of the grizzly bear. Thus we find them, even in their earliest history, subscribing to religious beliefs amounting, when our own are boiled down to principles, to practically the same thing—the rewarding of right living and the punishment of wrong.



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Their dead were held in great reverence and at their annual mourning feast, which was held in honor of the dead, great quantities of blankets, beads, baskets of the very finest workmanship, and other goods were burned as an offering to their departed relatives and friends. It was their belief that these articles were received and made use of in El-o-win. Many of the Indians kept themselves poor by yearly contributing nearly everything they owned to these fires.

They believed, because of the hot and cold winds which swirl about them, that some of the waterfalls of the Valley were favorite abodes of the evil spirit, and that if they ventured too near they would be drawn into the falls and killed. This superstition exists among them yet. The whirlwinds were also believed to contain evil spirits.

### DIVISION OF TERRITORY

They had well defined limits of territory, or boundaries, which had been agreed upon in council by the chiefs and headmen of the different tribes, and beyond which no Indian dared go except as a visitor or trader. These boundaries, however, did not extend into the high Sierra, which was held to be common hunting ground open to all the tribes.

### COMMERCE

They carried on a well organized system of commerce in which they exchanged articles with other tribes. In this manner they obtained from the Mo-nos around Mo-no Lake obsidian for use in making arrowheads,

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salt for domestic use, the larvae of beetles which were considered a great dainty and which were only found on the shores of Mo-no Lake, and other goods which were not to be found in the Valley; giving in exchange articles of food, skins, robes, and shells. The latter were obtained in exchange from Indians on the plains to the west and used as money by the mountain tribes.

### COMMUNICATIONS

The Indian was familiar with and practiced a rude method of telegraphy which consisted of smoke or fire signals flashed from one mountain top to another. In this manner they could readily communicate with each other and could spread important news over a large territory in a remarkably short time. There were several of these signal stations at suitable points around the Valley rim and in time of stress a watcher was on duty day and night.

In addition to the telegraph they practiced the foot relay system of runners in which they made use of their swiftest and strongest young men. These runners passing at top speed from village to village could spread news almost as rapidly as the smoke telegraph, and could, of course, transmit more detail than was possible by use of the signal fires.

### ANNUAL FEASTS

Each year, usually during the fall months, a great feast was held in the Valley in which all of the neighboring

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tribes took part. When the time for this feast approached a runner was sent out to the other tribes bearing an invitation to participate. This runner carried with him a bundle of small willow sticks corresponding in number to the suns that must set before the day of the feast. If his journey took more than a day one of these sticks was discarded. Elaborate preparations were made for the entertainment of the visitors, and for days before their arrival the squaws were kept busy gathering and preparing food. The braves also contributed their part to the preparations by indulging in a big hunt to supply meat for the occasion. A feature of these feasts was the presentation to the visiting tribes of gifts consisting of bead-work, blankets, baskets, and other articles. These gifts, or others of equal value, were always returned to the givers at the next annual feast, together with additional ones, which, in turn, must be returned the following year. In case of war between the tribes during the year intervening before the next feast these presents were kept as spoils. It was at these feasts that the braves of the other tribes wooed and often won the daughters of Ah-wah-nee. These feasts were also made the occasion of big dances and other ceremonies.

### DANCES

Dances were all symbolical in character, of more or less religious significance, and were never indulged in simply for pleasure. Both men and women took part in all of them, the women standing around shuffling their



FROM ARTIST'S POINT

*Photo—H. C. Tibbitts*

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feet, swaying their bodies and chanting a song, while the men, led by the chiefs and the medicine men, circled around the campfire stamping their feet, whirling about, making wild gestures with their arms, or with their bows and arrows which they sometimes carried, and grunting or joining in the chant with the women.

The war dance which was held just prior to taking the field against an enemy, was by far the most important of their dances. The Indian donned for this occasion his finest and most elaborate regalia, which was then worn into battle. This regalia was reserved for these occasions alone and was never brought out for any other purpose. They sometimes painted their faces hideously with a paint made from a kind of clay found along the river below the Valley. This was done to make them look ferocious and with the hope of terrifying the enemy, in fact the purpose of the war dance seems to have been to work the brave into a sort of religious frenzy, in which state he was expected to go forth and perform prodigious deeds of valor and strength. These dances were kept up for long periods, as soon as one dancer becoming exhausted another taking his place. It is doubtful if any white man has ever seen a real Yo-sem-i-te war dance, the exhibitions put up by the Indians in later years from purely mercenary motives being the merest shams, very little resembling the real article. In fact the Indians are universally opposed to telling the white man anything at all about their old customs and beliefs, no matter of how little importance they may seem, and if pressed for

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information on any subject, or even for corroboration of information received from another source, will usually lie most unmercifully, calling on a vivid imagination to concoct the most weird and impossible stories for the benefit of their questioner. The Indians of later years especially derive a great deal of quiet amusement from this baiting of the whites.

### HAND GAME

The hand game seems to have been the Indians' favorite amusement, and the annual feast was always the occasion of one of these tests of skill. Four bones about four inches long fashioned from the shank of the deer were used. Two of these were wrapped about the center with black fern root, the other two being left in their natural state. A fire was built, a game-keeper appointed, and the opposing teams, usually consisting of four or five of the best players from a tribe, took seats on the ground facing each other from opposite sides of the fire, their knees covered with a robe. Another robe was spread on the ground between them on which was placed the stakes, consisting of baskets, clothing, bead-work, weapons and other articles. The game-keeper was provided with ten small sticks of willow with which he kept score. The pieces of bone were then passed, under cover of the robe, from hand to hand or from one to another of the players, who, while this was being done, shouted at the top of their voices some favorite song. When these manipulations were finished the opposing team attempted

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to guess what hand the bones were in, receiving for each correct guess one of the tally sticks from the game-keeper. The bones were then passed to the other team and the process reversed, continuing thus until one team was in possession of all of the ten tally sticks. The game-keeper received a stipend from each pot as payment for his services.

Even yet there is hardly a day during the summer months that one cannot find this game being played in the Indian camp. It is a favorite pastime of the children who use the small coins given them by visitors, and on the occasion of the Indian Field Day which is held in the Valley during the fall months of each year, and to which Indians from all over the state flock by the hundreds, big games are held, sometimes continuing without break for three or four days and nights, as fast as one player dropping out another taking his place. At these games money is generally used, and pots running into the hundreds of dollars are not uncommon.

## MEDICINE MEN

The profession of medicine man was a popular one among the Indians and every tribe had one or more of these fakery. In most cases their knowledge of even the rudest forms of medical science was very limited, although they did sometimes effect simple cures. They nearly always combined the office of healer with that of religious leader, and were thought to be possessed of supernatural power, capable of communicating with the

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spirits of the dead. They were held in great respect by the entire tribe, wielding a great influence over the people and acting in the capacity of confidential adviser to the chief. However, their profession was not without its dangers. If a medicine man lost several patients in succession he was thought to be in the power of an evil spirit, and was killed. In any case where the patient failed to recover all fees were returned to his relatives.

When their magic failed to exterminate the whites, and thus stop the invasion of their country, they rapidly lost the respect of their followers, and when they were powerless to combat the diseases which followed closely on the coming of the whites, their own lives paid the forfeit.

They occasionally made use of medicinal herbs in their efforts to heal, but the most common method was to scarify with obsidian knives and suck away the cause of the pain. To impress the patient, and the spectators, thus making the treatment more effective, they often put into their mouths small stones, bugs, bits of wood, or other articles, which they spat out with the blood. The patient, thus convinced that the cause of his pain, or illness, had been removed, often made a quick recovery.

In later years when the Indians had become more or less familiar with the white man's methods of combating diseases, they resorted less and less to their medicine men, and the profession gradually died out.



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### MARRIAGE

Springtime, or when the flowers were blooming in the mountains, was the Indian's time for wooing. Polygamy was common among them, a man being allowed to take as many wives as he chose, or could pay for. This privilege, however, did not extend to the woman. Young women were regarded as the personal property of their parents, were usually sold to the highest eligible bidder, and the payment of their price comprised the wedding ceremony, although the medicine man was sometimes asked to be present. A smile was all that was necessary to let the young brave know that his suit was favored and the Indian maid had therefore to be rather sparing of her smiles. After the brave had settled his choice on some particular maiden he opened negotiations for her hand by presenting her father with gifts of skins, robes, and other goods. When these had been offered in sufficient quantity the father gave his consent and henceforth they were considered man and wife. If the match for any reason should be broken off all preliminary payments were returned to the giver. If successful in his married life the braves have been known to continue this presentation of gifts to their bride's father long after their marriage. After marriage the wife was the property of the man, to be dealt with as he chose. She might be sold or gambled away, although this privilege was seldom if ever exercised. Instances of unfaithfulness on the part of the woman were very rare. The punishment for this

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was death. Wife beating, such as is frequently indulged in by the so-called civilized man, was never known. Death was a much more preferable punishment, whipping being considered most humiliating and disgraceful.

### WIDOWS

Upon the death of a husband the widow had her hair all cut off. This was burned with her husband's body that he might have it with him in El-o-win as a reminder of her. Thus short hair became known as the badge of widowhood. After the body was burned its ashes were mixed with the rosin of the pine tree and this mixture smeared over the hands and face of the widow. This was done as a sign of mourning, and to render her unattractive to other men, thereby preventing any offers of remarriage until after a suitable time had elapsed. Each year a great ceremonial meeting was held at which the medicine man himself washed these stains from the face and hands of the widows. If the widow wished to remain true to the memory of her departed husband, and still feared offers of remarriage, she was privileged to apply a new coating. This was allowed to wear off, and as a preventative of any amorous advances was very effective, some of them presenting a particularly hideous and repulsive appearance. A widow was independent in the matter of marriage, but usually when consenting to remarry was presented with gifts by her new husband.

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### CHILDREN

The life of the Indian wife was one of menial labor and childbearing. The latter, however, fell lightly on the mothers of the tribe. The time for delivery arriving, she sought some quiet place by the side of a stream, sometimes accompanied by a female friend, but most frequently alone. The moment the child was born she bathed herself and her baby in the stream, covered it with strips of soft skins, strapped it in a baby basket, and carried it off on her back. The babies were kept in these baskets for about a year in order to make them grow straight, and to keep them out of mischief. Whipping children as a punishment for disobedience was never practised, the mother preferring to rule by kindness and patience. The pre-natal maternal influence and kind treatment during babyhood made the Indian child naturally patient and obedient to parental control. Also, due to the fact that the home was not cluttered with the bric-a-brac of civilization, the baby was not continually running afoul of some forbidden article or pleasure, but was allowed to roam at will about the villages and camps as would the cub of some forest creature.

Their instruction began at an early age, the girls being taught the methods of collecting and preparing food, the weaving of baskets, and other duties of the woman, while the boys were instructed in the methods of hunting, fishing, the making of bows and arrows, and other arts in which the men were expected to excel.

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### DISPOSAL OF THEIR DEAD

Upon the death of an Indian his body was turned over to a few members of the tribe who had been chosen by his relatives to perform the burial rites. The body was sewn in skins and, after a suitable pile of dry wood had been collected, the body with all his earthly possessions, together with gifts presented by relatives and friends, was placed on top of the wood, and when all was ready the pile fired by one of the assistants. As soon as the fire was lighted the professional mourners would begin their dance, circling round and round the burning pile, accompanying their weird contortions by the most unearthly wailing and howling. When one of these became exhausted and dropped out her place was immediately taken by another, and the dance kept up until the whole pile was consumed. The belief that by burning the body the spirit was more quickly released for its journey to El-o-win, and therefore stood a much better chance of escaping the evil spirits, who, upon the death of an Indian were believed to gather around the dead body awaiting their chance to capture the escaping spirit and carry it away to their own land of darkness and misery, was principally responsible for this practice.

Galen Clark says in his book "Indians of the Yosemite" that: "These Indians believe that everything on earth, both natural and artificial, is endowed with an immortal spirit, which is indestructible, and that whatever personal property or precious gifts are burned, either with

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the body or in later years for the departed friends' benefit, will be received and made use of in the spirit world. In recent years the Yo-sem-i-tes and other remnants of tribes closely associated with them, have adopted the custom of the white people, and bury their dead. The fine expensive blankets, and most beautifully worked baskets, which have been kept sacredly in hiding for many years, to be buried with the owner, are now cut into small fragments before being deposited in the ground for fear some white person will desecrate the grave by digging them up and carrying them away."

There is also a curious myth or legend regarding the source of this practice of burning the dead. It seems that in the beginning it was the plan of Coyote-man, who is believed to have been the creator of all things, to have the dead covered for four days with a blanket, after which they would be reborn in the prime of manhood, thus doing away with the comparatively useless period of childhood, and prolonging existence indefinitely. This plan suited everybody until someone died just as Larkman was getting married. The body was covered as usual and for a day or two everything was all right, then obnoxious odors began rising from the body, and the breeze wafted these into the hut of Larkman, who, quite properly resented having his honeymoon spoiled in that way, and said so in no uncertain terms. He contended that the proper thing to do was burn the body, thus doing away with the source of the objectionable odors and allowing people to enjoy themselves in peace.

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The matter was argued at some length, but finally his suggestion was adopted and the body burned. This custom has been practiced ever since, though it put an effective stop to Coyote-man's plan of having life renewed over and over.

## THE PRESENT DAY INDIAN IN YOSEMITE

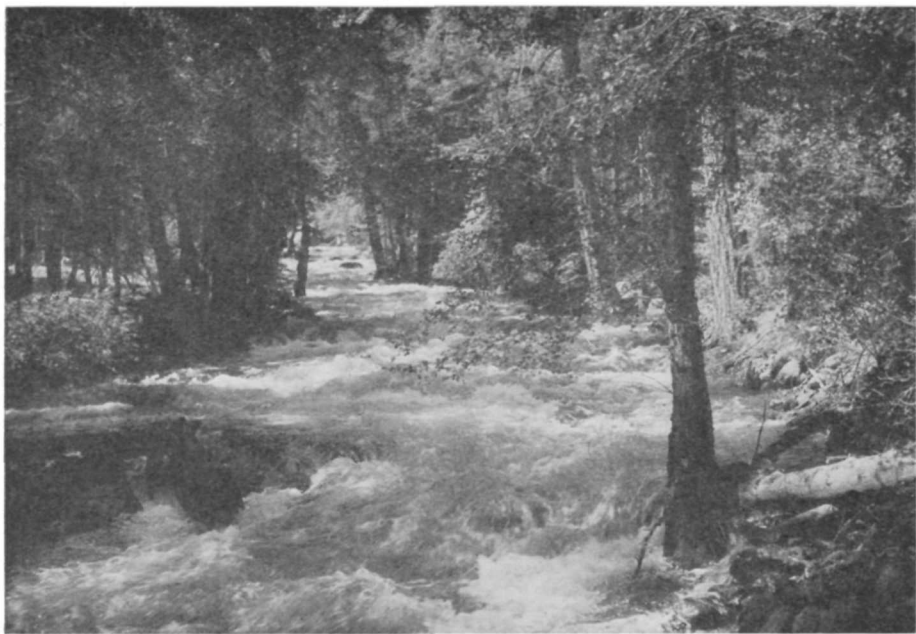
The tourist who visits the Indian camp in Yosemite expecting to find a village patterned after those of long ago is doomed to disappointment. The encroaching civilization of the white man has pushed all of that into the background, or entirely into the discard. The present day Indian wears the garb of the white man, cheap and dirty though it usually is. As a rule he eats the food of the white man, reverting to his acorn bread and other primitive dishes only on occasion of feast, and as a sort of memoriam to the good old days that are gone. The younger generation are being still further trained in the ways of the white man by attendance at his schools. The younger generation will usually be found to be neatly and cleanly, though more often, cheaply dressed, and living in clean if poor surroundings. The men who spend their summers in the Valley are employed by the government as laborers on the trails and roads, as guides and teamsters, and some of them on other work for which special training has fitted them. Some of the women are employed at the hotels as kitchen help and chambermaids.

The Indians deep in their hearts still harbor a resentment against the whites, although each year they receive

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many visitors to their camps with seeming indifference. It is well to be sincere in dealing with the Indians as they have an intuitive understanding of and a wholesome contempt for two-facedness. The old supposition, or saying, that an Indian has no place in his heart for gratitude could not be more untrue. They are appreciative of favors and quick to reciprocate a kindness. It takes a long time, a great deal of diplomacy and tact, coupled with at least a little understanding of Indian character, to establish yourself on terms of intimate friendship with the Indian, and always there are hidden recesses in his heart to which the white man will never be admitted.

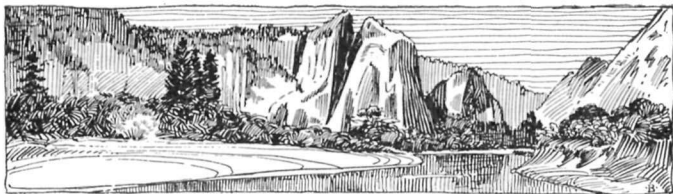
The traditional honesty of their race is upheld by the present day Indians, although there are, of course, exceptions. Occasionally one will steal from a white man, occasionally from another Indian of his own tribe, but more often, through a queer feeling of jealousy of possession, from a member of another tribe. There are at present making the Valley their summer home very few descendants of the original Ah-wah-nee-chees or Yosemite-s, most of them being of mixed origin, or half breeds. Most of them will, when they can procure the necessary liquor, get drunk, all, or nearly all, of them gamble, and occasionally one beats his wife or engages in a quarrel or fight with some of his neighbors. But they are in the main a quiet, peaceful, and law-abiding people, preferring to be left alone to work out their own salvation along such lines as they themselves may choose.



THE MERCED RIVER AT HAPPY ISLES.

*Photo A. C. Pillsbury*





## RETROSPECTION AND PROPHECY

THE verdict of every student of the race is that contact with the white man; the adoption of his cabin life and manner of living, his food and clothing, resulted in the immediate deterioration of the physical development of the Indian people.

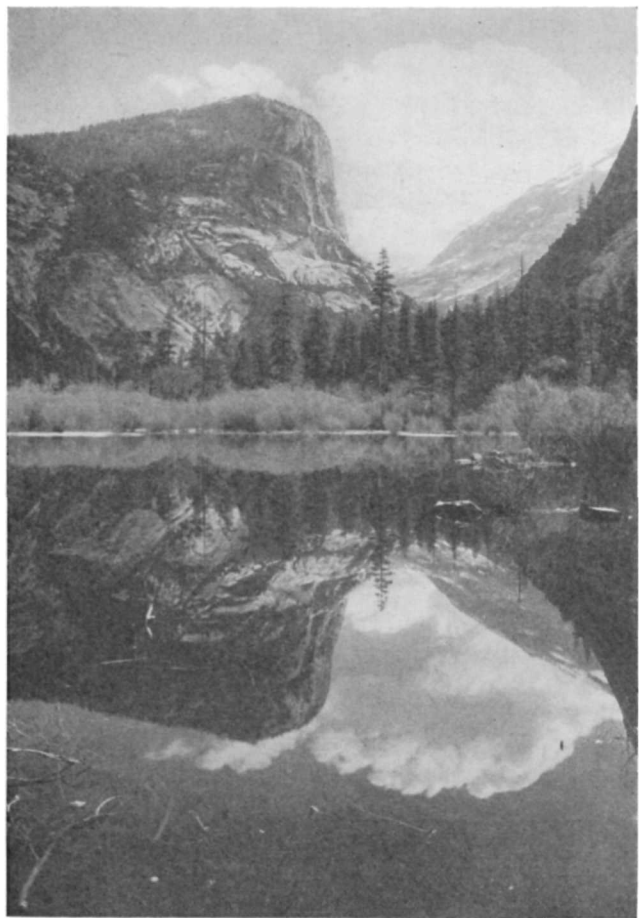
Their ideas of cleanliness and sanitation were extremely vague; in fact, they had none. The white man's employment of the quarantine as a preventive of the spread of contagious diseases was unknown to them. Their recognition of the necessity for avoidance of friends afflicted with these diseases was on a par with their methods of treatment. Consequently when the white man introduced his diseases among them they died by thousands, till their bleaching bones littered a thousand plains and hills.

The accumulation of filth was of relatively little menace to them as long as they lived in their o-chums as compared with the menace it became in later years to those who adopted the white man's method of living in a cabin. Then, they moved often and left their clutter behind them, pitching their o-chum, or camp, on fresh

ground; but this accidental sanitation did not apply to life in a cabin. Their ideas of ventilation were as vague as their ideas on sanitation. They simply closed up the windows and doors, fired up the stove and camped there until part of the family died of pneumonia, others developed consumption as an after effect of weakened lungs, and they finally decided that particular cabin was cursed by some evil spirit, and moved on to another where the process was repeated.

But their deterioration along other lines kept pace with, if it did not exceed, their physical losses. There are very few, if any, places left where one may see the primitive arts of the Indians practiced. Only in museums, or in the finest private collections, can one find bits of the old workmanship—the workmanship of the days before the red man's contact with the whites. Yet there was a time when these arts were taught from childhood, and every member of the tribe was familiar with them. The modern woman with all her paraphernalia of tools and patterns; of dyes and yarns; of flosses and cloths, cannot turn out one piece that in beauty of design, fineness of execution, or grace of outline, excels any one of a dozen made by the squaw of old who went into the woods and with her bare hands gathered her own materials.

But the white man came with his tools and implements. The bone awl, the deerskin thong, and the thread of the milkweed gave way to the white man's needles of steel and his spools of cotton and yarn. The picturesque and practical clothing of furs and skins was replaced by the



MT. WATKINS AND MIRROR LAKE (AH-WEI-YA).

*Photo A. C. Pillsbury*

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gaudy calico and denim of the itinerant trader. The drums and flageolets of old gave way to the newer instruments of the whites. The beautifully woven and artistic cooking baskets were superseded by the bright tin pots and pans of the new race. The highly nutritious bread and mush made from the meal of the acorn was forgotten in the novelty of the white man's sickly white flour. Tin can heaps began to grow about the camps. The dainty porcupine-quill and shell beads were replaced by atrocities fashioned from pounds of gaudy colored glass. The Indian laid aside the ways and customs of his fathers, and his arts are rapidly disappearing.

Before the coming of the white man the Indian could start with nothing and make his own implements. He made his own o-chum, his own clothing, and shoes, fashioned his own weapons with which he killed his meat; his own spear, and hook and line, with which he caught his fish; built his own fire; was his own doctor, lawyer, soldier and preacher; he was familiar with everything that went to make up his daily life; could perform every operation necessary for his existence, every detail from source to completion. Isn't there a chance that he was in a way a far broader man than the civilized product who lives his life within the narrow confines of his own highly specialized job and registers but one operation repeatedly throughout his life?

It seems as if the trouble with the modern world is that machinery—the inhuman organisms we have invented to do our work and be our slaves—has turned

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upon us and enslaved us. The machine moves in a deadly routine so we must follow it. The machine pretends to give us something, but at the same time it is sure to take something away. Freedom, initiative, the strength of our limbs, the power of our thoughts and aspirations, are taken away from us in factories, in trains and motor cars, in offices and counting houses. Whether in war or in peace we find ourselves no longer free individuals, but cogs in a vast machine, too big for the comprehension of any one man and too powerful for any man to fight against.

In subduing nature and winning freedom from its tyranny of heat and cold and famine and tempest and space, we have fallen into the power of another tyrant. A gloomy view, if we were not sure that it could not last. We are going through a transition period, and some day will swing back into the nomadic state again and refind the freedom that the caveman knew. While the lightning, the sun, the winds and the swinging tides, safely harnessed and broken to the bit, do our work for us, we will fare far from the haunts of man—back where the mountains are piled in a great and picturesque disorder, where trees grow tall and straight, and streams run pure and clean, gurgling like beautiful dryads' songs—for, "there is peace among the summits; purity in running water; good cheer in the crackling flame; truth in flowers and children; taunting lure in the forking trail; thought ungraspable in the pouring of the wind; music in the tree-top's swaying; freedom in the winging bird; grandeur in

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the drop of the cliffs; daring in the steeping crags; vastness on the sweeping plains; silence in the desert; thankfulness in the bubbling spring; sweet rest in the cooling shade; death in the plunge of precipice, in the crash of avalanche, and in the clear depths of the lake; blindness out over the sparkling snows; comradeship in dog and horse; safety in the rifle; skill in the slender rod; dreams under summer moons; work on the mountain side; something beyond the stars; glory in the dawn; danger and delight on every hand; sleep and forgetfulness unafraid on the bosom of our mother earth; friendship everywhere and life serene in everything."

"But, 'when you go to these things, kill if you must for food, but not for murder; burn not wantonly; leave the trail cleaner for the feet that follow; pollute nothing; let your words be as clean as those from the lips of a good woman, and as few as those of an Indian; let your actions be as soft and silent as those of the furred things around you; be as crystal, clean within yourself as the dew that jewels the morning grass. For here is a Temple in which none need kneel against his will, but in which all can stand upright and unashamed'."

"The shadow of His hand is upon the mountains, the hills grow dark beneath His palm. A straight trail and fair weather—the time has come to part."

## CHAPTER X

### GEOLOGY OF THE YOSEMITE VALLEY

**I**T is known that since the beginning of time the surface of the earth has undergone various changes brought about by its cooling and shrinking and by internal eruptions and disturbances.

During one of these disturbances the region between the Pacific Ocean and the Rocky Mountains was affected. Here the surface of the earth was broken into great blocks and one of these, four hundred miles long and eighty miles wide, was pushed up at its eastern edge, separating it from the depressed region to the east, leaving a steep scarp, and pulled down at its western edge giving it a gentle slope to the sea.

The streams which flowed in diverse directions before the uplift of this block now were given a definite course flowing down the slope to the west and forming broad shallow valleys. One of these streams was the Merced River which now flows through the Yosemite Valley.

After a great period of time there occurred a second upward thrust which raised the eastern edge of the block to an elevation of several thousand feet making a distinct mountain range, later known as the Sierra Nevada. This second uplift gave to the western side a greater incline so that the Merced River was given enough velocity to enable it, through the millions of years elapsing before a third series of uplifts, to cut a narrower valley within its old broad valley.

The tributary streams which flowed parallel to the range and at right angles to the Merced River were not benefited by the tilting of the block, hence the deeper the main river cut the higher the side streams were left above it. With the broadening and leveling of its bed the Merced lost its cutting power and flowed lazily over the valley floor.

The third and last uplift, greater than any preceding it, which raised the crest of the range to an elevation of over seven thousand feet in the north and about fourteen thousand feet in the southern part, gave to the Merced River such rapidity and power that it cut in its old valley a deep narrow canyon. The deepening of the river bed again left all of the side streams high in their hanging valleys to cascade down steep V-shaped walls to join the master stream; except Tenaya Creek with its southwesterly course, and Bridal Veil

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Creek, with its northwesterly course, both of which benefited by the tilting of the Sierra Block and also flowed over a less resistant bed of granite. These two tributaries were able to cut down to the level of the Merced River a depth two-thirds as deep as the present depth of the valley. The brink of the Bridal Veil Falls today marks the level at which the Merced River flowed just prior to the advent of the Ice Age.

The climate which, heretofore, had been of a semi-tropical nature gradually became frigid and snows piled up to a depth of thousands of feet in the higher mountains. The underlying snow became compact by the enormous weight into granular ice forming glaciers which moved down the old stream beds of Tenaya and Illilouette Creeks and the Merced River. These three glaciers joined at the upper end of the valley into one mighty glacier several thousand feet thick, filling the canyon to the rim and extending down to about the present site of El Portal.

Through the hundreds of centuries that this glacier existed moving slowly forward with tremendous weight and irresistible force it deepened the canyon over a third and transformed it from a V-shaped canyon to a broad U-shaped valley, seven miles long, a mile in width and approximately thirty-five hundred feet deep. The cutting back of the V-shaped canyon walls to vertical cliffs caused the cascading tributary streams now to drop sheer from their hanging valleys and today produce Yosemite's beautiful waterfalls.

Gradually the climate became warmer causing the glacier to retreat back to the summit of the range and the Merced River resumed its old course through the valley for thousands of years, until the climate again grew colder causing the glacier to advance. This time the dominion of the ice was much shorter than before so that the glacier reached a depth of only a thousand feet and did little more than to add to the cliff sculpturing started by the first glacier and to leave a moraine spanning the valley below El Capitan, where the ablation of summer balanced its forward movement. When the climate again became warmer causing the glacier to recede, this moraine acted as a dam, holding back the water from the melting ice forming a lake on the valley floor five and a half miles long.

During the twenty thousand years since the retreat of the ice the Merced River carrying sand and gravel has filled the lake completely, a depth of about three hundred feet, bringing the valley floor to its present level. Remnants of this last ice field still exist at the base of some of the highest peaks in Yosemite National Park.

The granite in this region is made up of irregular blocks forming joints or cracks except those huge masses that stand out as Yosemite's



## THE LORE AND THE LURE OF THE YOSEMITE

most prominent features, El Capitan, Cathedral Rocks and Half Dome. These, on account of their solidity, resisted the erosion of the glacier. The rounding of the domes is due to the expansion and contraction of the heat and cold which caused the rocks to shale off in layers like those of an onion.

On account of the compactness of the underlying rock in the Little Yosemite, upper Merced Canyon, the Merced Glacier was unable to quarry down to the depth of the Tenaya Canyon, which is two thousand feet lower, as the rock here, being closely jointed, facilitated the work of the glacier.

The floor of the Little Yosemite found in the upper Merced Canyon is the first of two giant steps made by the glacier in its descent and over which the river now flows forming Nevada and Vernal Falls.

Today great quantities of rock are to be found at the base of the cliffs forming talus slopes. This is caused by the weathering of the cliffs and also by intermittent earthquakes which have shaken down the rock from the valley walls. One of these earthquakes caused the rock to be thrown down from the cliff at the base of North Dome across Tenaya Canyon holding back the water of Tenaya Creek and forming Mirror Lake. The same fate is befalling Mirror Lake as that of Lake Yosemite, as Tenaya Creek increased in volume by the melting of the snow in the Spring heavily laden with sand, is extending its delta farther and farther into the lake. Eventually it will be filled and replaced by a meadow or a forest of pines.

Thus has God fashioned a Cathedral with the granite cliffs for the walls, the canopy of the heavens for the roof, and as the artist adds the last subtle touch to his masterpiece so has the Creator caused the forces of nature to deposit seeds of trees and beautiful plants to adorn the mighty cliffs and the valley floor.

